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John Gabriel Perboyre

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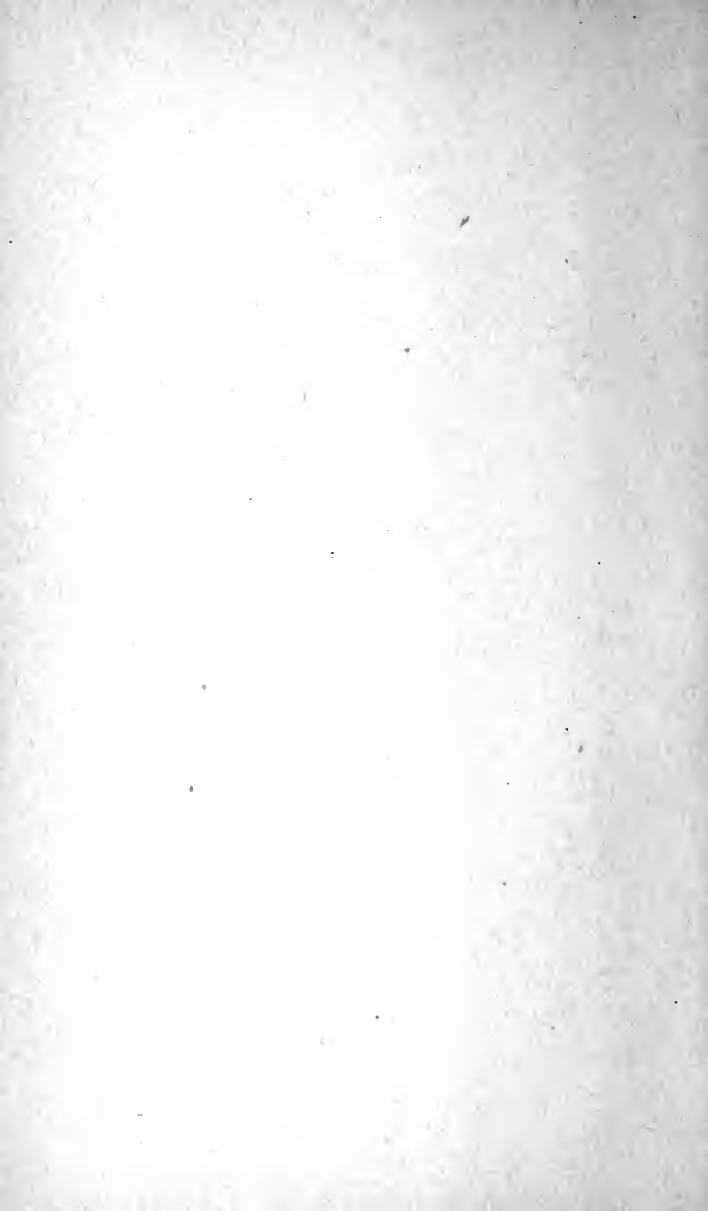
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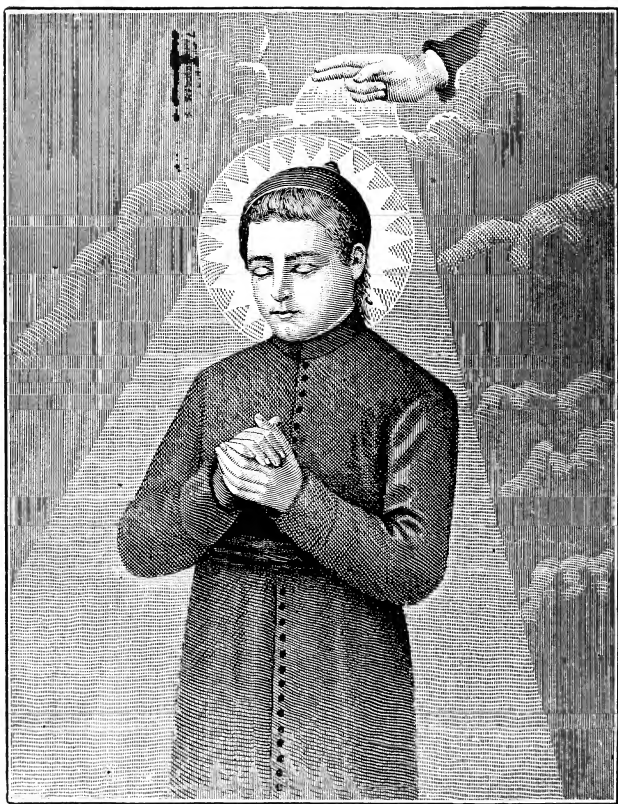
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BLESSED JOHN GABRIEL PERBOYRE, C. M.  
BORN JANUARY 6TH, 1802.



# LIFE

OF THE

BLESSED SERVANT OF GOD,

THE HEROIC MARTYR

# JOHN GABRIEL PERBOYRE,

Priest of the Congregation of the Mission.

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*TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH*

By LADY CLARE FEILDING.

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APPENDIX SPECIALLY PREPARED FOR AMERICAN EDITION.

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PUBLISHED BY  
FINNEY BROTHERS,  
NEW ORLEANS.

1894.

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## PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

In placing this little book before the English-speaking public, at a popular price, the publishers feel they are doing a real service to Catholic literature. The records of Christian heroism contain few examples as remarkable as that furnished in the closing scenes of the life of the Martyr, Father Perboyre. Up to the present, however, his life in English has had but a small circulation, because it sold for such a high price that but few purchased or read it.

The Appendix will be found interesting, especially to readers in the United States, where occurred all the events described. It will have, moreover, the effect of bringing devotion to the Martyr, more home to us Americans when we see the effects of his intercession so evident, and among the very people of whom we ourselves form a part. Under the patronage of its Blessed Subject we place the book in the market, confident that, however it may fare as

a financial venture, it can not fail to win a higher success than that represented by dollars and cents.

THE PUBLISHERS.

*New Orleans, May 1, 1894.*

## PREFACE.

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I have been asked to put a few words by way of preface to this translation of a little life of a great servant of God. I can not but regard it as a privilege to be associated, in however slight a degree, with so useful an undertaking.

It is of supreme importance for us children of the Catholic Church in this nineteenth century to realize that we are, even in this life and in this century, "fellow citizens of the Saints;" that we have saints amongst our fellow citizens; men and women subject to the same influences and conditions as ourselves, whom, if we have not known, we might have known, and whose brethren are still with us; but whose lives establish their unmistakable spiritual identity with those of the Apostles and Martyrs of the early Church.

Father Perboyre, the subject of this memoir, was born in 1802, and completed his glorious career, by martyrdom, on the Chinese Mission, in 1840, in the 38th year of his age. Until he

was thirty-two, his life presented no salient features to attract the attention of the external world. It was a life of prayer and patient usefulness, with nothing extraordinary about it, except—and what an exception!—that, according to their continuous testimony, those who knew him best were unable to discover in him “the least shadow of an imperfection.” Owing to his weak health, his superiors had long persuaded themselves that whilst Father Perboyre was admirably fitted for the work of forming subjects for the Apostolic ministry, it was quite impossible that he should ever take an active part in it himself. However, in 1835, yielding, they could hardly explain why, to his intense desire, they allowed him to depart for the Chinese Mission.

For some four years he endured the colossal labors and hardships of the Apostolate, and then, from the time of his arrest in September, 1839, to his execution in September, 1840, he underwent an almost continuous succession of the most hideous tortures, as cheerfully and simply as though they had been the most ordinary exercises of his vocation.

How hopelessly the world misconceives the concentrated quiet energy of the saint's life, as he goes about his Master's business, “*circa*

*frequens ministerium,*” or kneels in silent prayer at his Master’s feet! “A life of dull littleness,” it exclaims, “or at best the shimmering surface of an idle sea of false emotion signifying nothing, a spiritual *far niente*.” But only let the summons of the breath of the Lord go forth upon its waters, and then mark the awakening, “*Mirabiles elationes maris, mirabilis in altis Dominus.*” The cause of God articulates itself, as before in minute observance, so now under conditions of colossal conflict, but the battle has already been won, and the altered circumstances are not required to make the saint but only to proclaim him. “For I have lost a race I never ran,” is the despairing cry of the despiser of little things, whereas the saint has many times over won his martyr’s crown in the hour of peace. But surely this position has never been more hardly strained than in the case of our martyr, for his death was not, as the Church sings, “*Mortis sacræ compendio,*” but a protracted agony of nigh upon twelve months.

The note of sanctity is not a weapon easy to wield in the arena of controversy, but on the other hand its silent influence is nearly irresistible. For ourselves, in no more efficacious way than in such a life as this can be conveyed the

salutary reproach, so keen and so tender,  
expressed by the poet:

“I see them walking in an air of glory,  
Whose light doth trample on my days;  
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,  
Mere glimmering—and decays.”

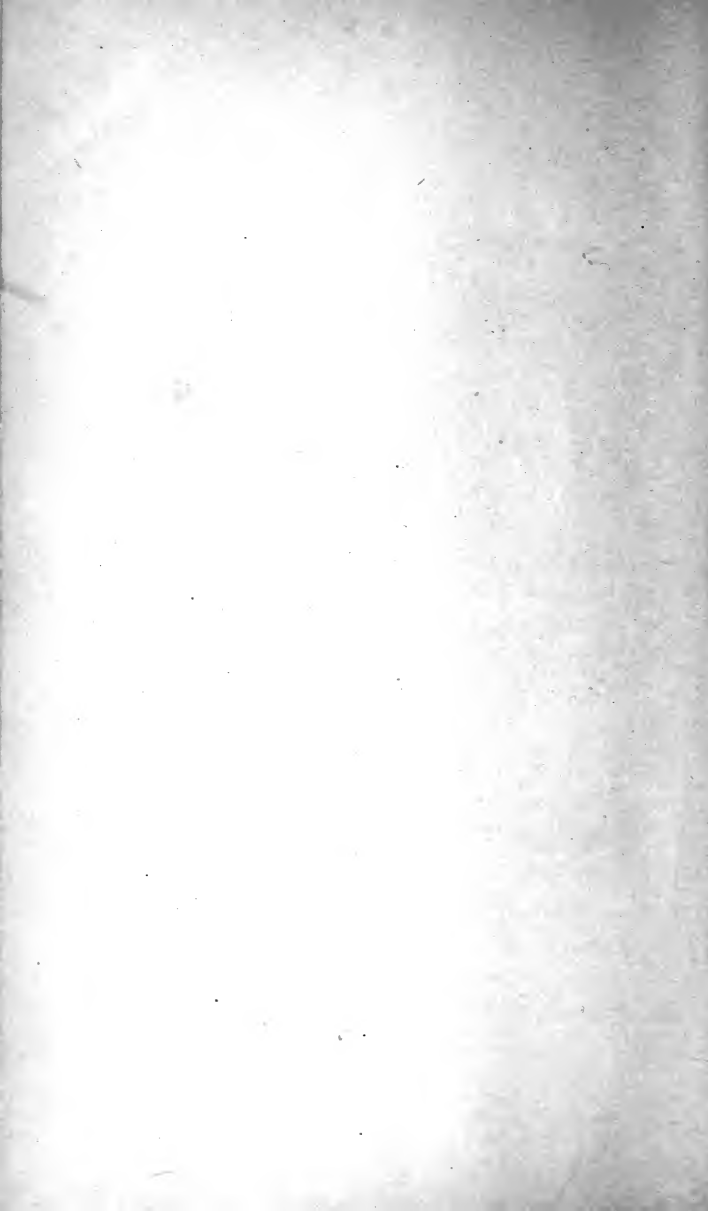
H. I. D. RYDER.



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LIFE OF THE BLESSED  
JOHN GABRIEL PERBOYRE, C. M.

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CHAPTER I.

BIRTH OF JOHN GABRIEL—HIS EARLY YEARS, UNTIL HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION. (1802-1818.)

His birth, parentage and early years—School, Catechism and First Communion—His perseverance in well-doing—The Apostolate he exercised on all around him—He accompanies his brother Louis to the Little Seminary at Montauban—They wish to keep him—His vocation is decided, and he remains—His application to Study—His exemplary conduct—He goes through his course of Philosophy, and takes the place of one of the Professors.

ON the 6th of January, 1802, at Le Puech, a little village of the parish of Mongesty in the diocese of Cahors, was born a child who, on the following day, received at the baptismal font the name of John Gabriel, and who was destined by the fame of his virtues and the triumph of a death, gloriously undergone for the name of Christ, to give great honor to God and to the congregation of St. Vincent of Paul.

His parents, Pierre Perboyre and Marie Rigal, though scantily provided with the good things of this world, were abundantly blessed with those of grace. A faith simple and strong as that of the first ages, a rule of life almost patriarchal in its simplicity, and the purity of which was derived from the minute practice of all the duties of a Christian life, such was the most precious portion of their inheritance. The blessing of God was upon them, for from their union sprang eight children, four sons and four daughters, who all proved themselves worthy of such truly Christian parents. Two of the daughters are at this moment Sisters of Charity, and another died just as she was about to enter the Community. Of the four sons, three entered the Congregation of the Mission—John Gabriel, our venerable martyr, Louis, who died at sea on his way to China, and James, who has survived his two missionary brothers, and is now in Paris.

The early years of John Gabriel showed few traces of the levity generally so characteristic of children. His language and demeanor displayed a gravity far beyond his age, and the piety he showed, remarkable as it was in a child of only five years old, inspired his own family with a kind of veneration. He had a special at-

traction for all sacred things, and the divine love, of which his young heart was full, evinced itself in the way in which he pronounced the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and in his devout bearing, both in Church and while saying his prayers at home.

Endued with a rare modesty, he had an instinctive horror of the least thing which could wound that delicate virtue; and to such an extent was this carried that he never willingly lent himself to any familiarity or outward show of human affection. At the same time, his pure heart was full of an exquisite sensibility, which made him keenly alive to all the sufferings of his neighbors. He had a great love for the poor, and delighted in relieving them, although he never permitted himself this pleasure without first obtaining the consent of his parents, so entirely was he "subject to them," after the manner of the Child Jesus. This docility, not only to their orders, but even to their wishes, was never known to fail him, and never once had they cause to reproach him with the slightest disobedience. At an early age he showed himself deserving of the utmost confidence, and when only six years old was entrusted with the care of a little flock of sheep, a charge which he fulfilled to the satisfaction of

every one, never showing the smallest sign of impatience, notwithstanding the frequent inclemency of the weather and the difficulty he had in managing the animals.

At eight years of age he was sent to school, where his love of study soon attracted the attention of his master, and together with his goodness won for him the esteem and respect of his companions. He was never known to become familiar with any of them, and though on good terms with all, he was best pleased to be with those who showed the greatest inclination for piety.

At the Catechism classes his intelligence and industry were no less remarkable, and the priest, struck by this combination of knowledge and piety in so young a child, did not hesitate to break through the ancient custom of the parish, and admitted him when only eleven years old to make his first Communion. No one dreamed of blaming this exception; and there was general rejoicing when *the little saint*, as he was commonly called, was seen to approach the holy table and receive the Bread of Angels.

The fervor which he showed on this occasion was no passing feeling, and from that day forth, John Gabriel, became the model of the parish.

Every spare moment was devoted to spiritual reading, generally the "Lives of the Saints," and in particular the life of "St. Vincent of Paul," for whom he had a special affection; and on Sundays and feast days he spent the whole day in the Church, which, indeed, he seemed to make his home.

The divine charity which filled his own heart, made its sweet and salutary influence felt by all about him. Animated by an ardent, though wise and enlightened zeal, he exercised a regular apostolate not only in his own family and among his brothers and sisters, whom he instructed and encouraged, but even among the laborers with whom he worked in the fields, and whose language, under his influence, became less rude and coarse.

Such a rare combination of qualities could not but presage a happy future, and people asked themselves, as formerly in the case of St. John the Baptist: "What a one, think ye, shall this child be?" *Quis putas puer iste erit?* (Luke i. 66.) We shall see what answer Divine Providence gave to this question.

One of John Gabriel's younger brothers was also gifted with an excellent disposition. His gentle piety, and oft-repeated desire of becoming a priest caused his parents to send him to

the Little Seminary at Montauban, under the care of his uncle, Rev. James Perboyre, who was then Superior. But as he was of a timid nature, and of rather delicate health, John Gabriel asked permission to accompany him, and to stay with him for the first two months, in order to accustom him to his new life. So both together the two brothers left home for the first time. It was, doubtless, a great sorrow to a family whose members were so united, but the thought of John Gabriel's speedy return helped to soothe the bitterness of the parting.

This hope, however, was not destined to be realized, for God had other designs upon the boy which were soon to be made manifest.

At first John Gabriel thought only of spending the time which he had to pass with his brother, in picking up some useful knowledge, studying French grammar, arithmetic and a little geometry. But very soon his masters, struck by his piety, amiable qualities, and aptitude for study, and perceiving in him unequivocal signs of a vocation, urged the Superior to keep the boy, and to let him begin Latin. Rev. James Perboyre did not at first give his consent, although he secretly wished the same thing himself, but replied simply: "We must leave



his poor parents somebody to help them to till their vines.”

However, when the father came to fetch his son home, the masters all pressed him to allow the boy to continue his studies, representing to him what a pity it would be to condemn to a laborer's life, a youth, who seemed to have a career so full of promise before him. Before consenting, the father sounded John Gabriel on the subject, and tried to find out what his own wishes were. But he, understanding all the importance of the step he was about to take, asked for time to examine the question before God, and on June 16, 1817, wrote to his father as follows:

“MY DEAR FATHER—As soon as you had gone, I thought over your proposal that I should study Latin, and I consulted God as to what state of life I ought to embrace so as most surely to gain Heaven. After much prayer, I concluded that our Lord wished me to enter the ecclesiastical state, and, consequently, I have begun to learn Latin. I know how much you stand in need of the little help I am able to give you, and my only regret is not to be able to assist you in your heavy labors; but still, if our good God calls me to the priesthood, there is no other road by which I can possibly attain to a blessed eternity.”

This letter, full of such truly Christian feeling, put an end to his father's hesitation, and he at once declared that he was ready not only to refrain from putting any obstacle in the way of his son's vocation, but even to make all the necessary sacrifices to further it.

Happy in being able thus to respond to the call of God, John Gabriel applied himself with ardor to his new studies, and in spite of his comparatively advanced age (he was past fifteen) he soon made rapid progress. Six months after beginning Latin he was put into the fifth class; at Easter he passed into the fourth, and as he still held the first place they promoted him to the second, and thence into the rhetoric class, where he was equally successful.

He was no less remarkable for his irreproachable conduct, his exemplary regularity, and his true and solid piety. Humility, charity, gentleness, modesty, zeal and mortification were some of his chief characteristics. He soon became the object of a sort of veneration among his fellow students, besides possessing the esteem and affection of his masters. Far from presuming upon these advantages, he sincerely regarded himself as the lowest of all, seeking only to efface himself, and to put in practice that maxim of the Imitation so dear to humble souls:

“Love to be unknown, and to be esteemed as nothing, *ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari.*”

The study of philosophy, to which he applied himself on finishing his rhetoric, revealed in him a clear judgment combined with great facility of conception, and a mind naturally inclined to metaphysics. Such talents, together with so much virtue, induced his uncle to appoint him to replace one of the professors who had just left the house, being fully persuaded that the young philosopher would be found equal to the task. He was not disappointed, and the new master soon gained the esteem and affection of his pupils to such a degree that thirty years afterwards many of them could not speak of him without tears of emotion.

But Divine Providence was gradually preparing him for a still more perfect life, and before long the Congregation of the Mission was to open its doors to receive him.

## CHAPTER II.

HIS NOVITIATE, VOWS AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES.

(1818-1823.)

First signs of his Vocation to the Congregation of the Mission—He consults God in Prayer—He is admitted to the Congregation—His Virtues during the Novitiate—His Holy Vows—His departure for Paris; admirable act of detachment—Regret felt on his leaving Montauban—The good impression he makes at the Mother-House—His application to his Theological Studies—His progress in perfection.

WE have already remarked upon the love for the poor which John Gabriel showed in his childhood, and his delight in helping them. This feeling increased during his stay at the Little Seminary, and he was often found depriving himself of his breakfast or luncheon to give it to the beggars who stood at the door.

We have also seen how, among the “Lives of the Saints,” which formed his habitual reading, his preference was always for the life of St. Vincent of Paul, and beneath the veil of humility under which he strove to hide himself, it was easy to guess the ardent zeal with which his heart burned for the salvation of souls, especially of those who were sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death. Once towards the end

of his rhetoric, in an essay which he read at a distribution of prizes, the following sentence occurred, showing clearly enough the secret longing of his heart: "Ah! how beautiful is the cross planted in the midst of a heathen land and watered with the blood of the Apostles of Jesus Christ!"

Nobody was astonished, therefore, when he made known his wish to enter the Congregation of the Mission, founded by St. Vincent of Paul, for the special care of the poor, and among whose members, many devote themselves to the conversion of heathen countries.

Already, in 1817, after hearing a mission sermon, he had said: "I mean to be a missionary!" but little attention was paid to his declaration, which was thought to be only the passing emotion of a young heart, impressed by the ardent and impassioned words of the preacher. The event showed it to be the expression of a deep and lasting attraction of which God himself was the Author.

Feeling himself inwardly more and more urged to join the Congregation of the Mission, and to go and preach the Faith to the heathens in China, John Gabriel wished first of all to consult God in prayer. With this intention he made a novena in honor of St. Francis Xavier,

the great apostle of the Indies, which confirmed him in his design. He then opened his heart to his uncle, Rev. James Perboyre, who at first attached but little importance to his request; but, finally, being persuaded that God was in truth calling him into the family of St. Vincent, he applied to the superiors, and obtained for John Gabriel admission to the congregation.

It was in the month of December, 1818, that John Gabriel donned the poor but holy garb of a missionary. The Congregation of the Mission, so cruelly tried during the stormy period of the French Revolution, had hitherto been unable regularly to reconstitute its Mother-House, or to re-establish its novitiate. It was necessary, therefore, to allow John Gabriel to spend the two years which precede the taking of the vows, at Montauban with his uncle, in order to give himself up as much as possible to the exercises customary in the congregation during that period of probation.

Alone in the novitiate save for one other companion, and having at one and the same time to finish his own philosophical studies, and perform the duties of a professor in the house, the conditions of our young novice seemed little favorable for the formation of a religious life. But God who had placed His servant in this

difficult position, Himself undertook to form him, and the workings of grace produced such happy results in this docile spirit, that John Gabriel might serve as a model for the most pious and fervent of novices.

The virtues he then practised were on a par with those of St. John Berchmans, St. Aloysius, St. Stanislas Kostka, and those other saints whom the Church honors and holds up as models to young people. The narrow limits of this short life will not permit us to go into details however edifying. We must confine ourselves to quoting the testimony of his fellow-novice, a man of keen and observant character, quick to recognize a fault or an absurdity. "The whole time I was with him," he writes, "he was the constant object of my admiration and astonishment. Although I watched him carefully, even playing the spy occasionally, I never could succeed in finding the least fault in him. I was in a manner annoyed to find him so perfect. I might even say that I went so far as to put his virtue to the proof, but he was unsailable; and I do not believe it possible for a novice to carry perfection further than he did."

And thus when the moment came for taking his vows, he was able to cry out with the Psalmist, *Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor*

*meum*: “My heart is ready, O Lord, my heart is ready.” (Ps. cvii. 2.) Indeed, his heart was already so perfectly detached both from creatures and from himself, that he was ready for that total self-immolation, of which the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience are the consummation; and he was burning to consecrate his whole life to the service of the poor by that fourth vow which St. Vincent has imposed upon his children.

It was on the 28th of December, 1820, that he had the happiness of offering this sacrifice to God, and of contracting with Jesus Christ that divine alliance which he was, in after days, to seal with his own blood, like the Holy Innocents whose feast is kept on that same day. And henceforth this day, fraught with such happy memories, took its place among his most cherished anniversaries.

Thus definitely enrolled in the Congregation of the Mission, Mr. Perboyre was called to Paris, there to commence his theological studies, and his departure was signalized by an act of detachment, of which a young man of nineteen would seldom be capable. His uncle, knowing his affection for his parents, proposed that he should go and pay them a visit before starting; an arrangement which could easily have been



carried out, as he had actually to pass Cahors which was only three or four hours distant from Le Puech, on his way to Paris. But this worthy child of St. Vincent replied: "Our Blessed Father never went but once to visit his parents, and that he repented of having done afterward; if you will allow me, I should like to make this sacrifice to God." They had not the courage to refuse the permission. But his parents, who had not seen him for so long, and who were far from sharing this heroic generosity, came to Cahors to see and embrace him once more, and in order to induce him to accompany them, pointed out the road to Le Puech. "It is not the road to Heaven," he said; "to reach Heaven we must make sacrifices," and tearing himself from their arms he went his way.

The void he left at Montauban was immense; all alike, masters and pupils, regretted him as a brother, a father and a friend, or rather they wept for him as one would weep at the departure of a saint or an angel, whose very sight was the edification of all, and whose presence seemed to draw down signal blessings upon the house.

The treasure which Montauban had lost was quickly appreciated at Paris, and his superiors were charmed with the ardor and success with which he pursued his ecclesiastical studies.

The angelic doctor St. Thomas Aquinas was not only his master, he was also his model. Following his example, he had a horror of vain glory, while his only ambition was to please God, to procure His greater glory, and in due time to be of use to his neighbor. Like St. Thomas also he knew how to combine study with prayer, and sought at the foot of his crucifix that divine light and heavenly unction which are not to be found in books. He never forgot that an ill-regulated and too exclusive application to study dissipates the mind, dries up the heart and weakens piety.

A pious missionary who was among the number of his fellow-students says of him: "Throughout all this period I found him a perfect model of every virtue, inciting us all to become better. I was never able to discover the least fault in him, and although he sometimes accused himself of failing in gentleness, I never could see wherein the failure lay. People may say all the good they like of him, but I do not think it is possible to exaggerate it. There was nothing extraordinary about him, but there seemed to be nothing defective, and the more one considered and studied him, the more astonished one was to find him perfect everywhere, and in everything."

## CHAPTER III.

HIS FIRST EMPLOYMENTS AT MONTDIDIER AND SAINT  
FLOUR.

(1823-1832.)

His first year at Montdidier—He is appointed Professor of Philosophy—His love for the poor—He is recalled to Paris, to be ordained Priest—He goes to teach theology at a great seminary of Saint Flour—His teaching—The way he formed his pupils—The admiration with which he inspired his brethren—He is named Superior of the ecclesiastical boarding school of Saint Flour—The difficulties he encounters—His aptitude for the education of the young—He is recalled to Paris—Regrets inspired by his departure from Saint Flour—Death of his brother Louis—He goes to visit his family.

HAVING finished his course of theology in 1823, Mr. Perboyre, then scarcely twenty-one years of age, was ordained sub-deacon and sent to the College of Montdidier where he remained two years. The first year he was set to teach a class of the youngest scholars, whose hearts he soon gained by his goodness, gentleness, and simple and winning piety. He availed himself of these good dispositions to found a little confraternity among them, which he placed under the invocation of the Holy Angels, and which produced the most happy results.

The following year a very different charge was committed to him; he was intrusted with the class of philosophy, which he succeeded in making at once useful and interesting.

The care with which he prepared his classes and applied himself to his other professional duties did not prevent him from finding time to visit the poor of the town, and the prisoners. His love for these suffering members of Jesus Christ made him ingenious in procuring them relief, which it was his delight to distribute to them in person. He often got one or other of his pupils to accompany him on these charitable expeditions, liking to initiate them into the practice of works of mercy; and they on their side disputed among themselves as to who should have the happiness of serving an apprenticeship to Christian charity under such a master.

Mr. Perboyre had now reached his twenty-fourth year, and his superiors deemed it advisable to recall him to Paris, to be ordained priest. This announcement filled him both with joy and fear. On the one hand he rejoiced at the prospect of ascending each day to the altar, and nourishing himself with the Bread of Angels; while on the other, conscious of all the holiness required for such an august ministry, he feared to present himself for ordination with insuffi-

cient dispositions. These sentiments of humility only served to prepare him more fully for the grace of the priesthood, which he received on the 23d of September, 1825, in the Chapel of the Mother-House of the Sisters of Charity. It is a coincidence worthy of remark that on the very same day in the year 1600, St. Vincent of Paul had also been ordained priest at Château-l'Evêque by the Bishop of Perigueux.

None but God and His Holy Angels can ever know how perfect were the interior dispositions of the young candidate for ordination, nor with what fervor the newly ordained priest celebrated his first Mass on the morrow. But one may safely affirm that from that moment he applied himself more assiduously than ever to the study of perfection, putting off more and more the old man, so as to clothe himself afresh with the new, thus realizing in his own person that ideal of a priest, *sacerdos alter Christus*.

Henceforth Father Perboyre was called to infuse into others that admirable sacerdotal spirit which filled his own heart. Appointed director and professor of dogmatic theology at the Great Seminary of Saint Flour, he proved himself, notwithstanding his youth, to be more than equal to the task.

His teaching was the more appreciated and

the more fruitful in that he preached principally by example. His exalted intelligence loved to soar to the heights of Catholic dogma, expounding it with wonderful clearness and a singular precision. He knew even how to shed a charm and an interest over the most abstract subjects, divesting them of all that was dry and repellent to the ears of his listeners, but above all he made his course of study an eminently practical one, seeking in every subject fresh sustenance for his pupils' piety.

Thus, while continuing their theological studies, they were enabled to make rapid progress in the science of the saints. But it was especially those, and they were not few, who had chosen him as the guide of their conscience, whom he made the special object of his sacerdotal zeal. The affectionate and entirely supernatural attachment he felt for them, the gentle firmness with which he guided them in the paths of virtue, in a word, his wise, enlightened and fatherly direction, made them love and venerate him like an angel from heaven. There was in fact something truly angelic about this great servant of God, a sort of halo of sanctity, which became even more apparent during his celebration of the Sacred Mysteries, so that people on seeing him at the

altar could not forbear exclaiming, as formerly in the case of St. Vincent of Paul, "Ah! there is a priest who does say his Mass well!" or again: "Look at Father Perboyre, he is a saint and a privileged saint; he surely can never have lost his baptismal innocence!"

There was at that time at St. Flour an ecclesiastical school, founded a few years previously and afterwards to become the present Little Seminary, but which up to that moment had only maintained itself with the utmost difficulty. Its development had been hindered by obstacles and difficulties of all kinds, and its very existence seemed to be seriously threatened. After many fruitless attempts to remedy this disastrous state of things, attention was drawn to the young professor of theology at St. Flour, and it was resolved, despite his youth, to place him at the head of the establishment.

It was towards the close of the year 1827 that Father Perboyre entered upon his new charge, one calculated to discourage any man less accustomed to count upon the help of God. The house was destitute of all resources; the scholars little accustomed to discipline; while, outside there were enmities and prejudices, and even among the best inclined persons apprehensions which the youthfulness of the new

Superior seemed only to justify. But knowing, as St. Vincent says, that "Divine Providence never abandons us in any work which we undertake at Its bidding," Father Perboyre was not to be daunted even in the face of such difficulties. They served, in fact, only to augment his confidence, for the greater the disproportion between the undertaking that lay before him and the means at his disposal, the more sure he felt of His aid who loves to make use of the feeblest instruments for the accomplishment of His mightiest works.

There was, however, nothing of presumption in this confidence, and whilst he counted upon God for success, Father Perboyre left nothing undone on his own part to insure it. Without giving offence to any one, his watchfulness soon made him acquainted with all that went on in the house. He was always ready to bestow his much prized approbation on whatever he found of good; the evil he combated with a wisdom and prudence, a gentleness and firmness which, irresistible as it was, never wounded any one.

The fatherly affection which he showed to all, both masters and pupils, soon drew all hearts to him, and facilitated the exercise of his authority. Very quietly he set about the



reformation of abuses, little by little transforming the entire establishment, so that at the end of a short time it was perfectly unrecognizable. All opposition both from within and without was disarmed by his sweetness and humility. The parents forgot the youth of the superior and learned to see in him only a holy priest and a master deserving of all their confidence, while the undisciplined pupils he had found on his arrival soon became tractable and docile; their number increased rapidly, and though they were only thirty when he came, they numbered more than a hundred the following year. The temporal administration of the house, thanks to his wise and intelligent guidance, was soon placed on a better footing, and to crown all, his fellow workers formed themselves upon his model in that most difficult of arts, the education of the young. Father Perboyre was in fact specially fitted for the education of young people. In his treatment of them individually he knew how to take into account differences of age, character and temperament. He could tell which was the most sensitive chord in every heart, and knew how to touch it in order to obtain the happiest results. It needed but a word, a gesture or a look from him to obtain what he desired—the subjection of a pride that had hither-

to shown itself indomitable, or the awakening of salutary remorse in the most guilty conscience. To give but one example: There was a boy who had become so intractable that his masters, having fairly tried every means to bring him to better dispositions, finally begged that he might be expelled. Before yielding to their request Father Perboyre resolved to make a last attempt himself. He succeeded so well that in a short time that boy became the model of the house.

True it is that in order to arrive at such results he employed means known only to the saints. One day, having sent for a culprit to his room, after vainly exhausting the language both of gentleness and of just severity, he turned suddenly to his crucifix and pointing to it, said in a tone of indescribable sadness: "How many sorrowful moments, my dear boy, you have made me spend at the feet of Jesus crucified!" The culprit could not resist such an appeal; he begged pardon, and his conduct changed from that hour. At other times he would fall upon his knees at the foot of his crucifix and there make reparation in the name of the culprit he wanted to win over, until sharing the sentiments he heard uttered with such profound conviction, he too went away with tears in his eyes and repentance in his heart.

But the first and the last of all his means, the one that accompanied every other, was prayer. Giving an account one day, in all simplicity, of his method of prayer he said: "I begin by rendering homage to God, then I reflect upon my own needs, on the needs of the masters, the boys, and all those who make up the household, and then I ask our Lord to grant to each one what he is most in want of." Such prayers as these could hardly fail to draw down abundant graces upon the establishment, and as long as Father Perboyre remained, the blessing of God rested on the place.

But for those who had the happiness of living in his loved and saintly company this time was far too short. There was universal mourning at Saint Flour when, at the end of five years, he was recalled by his superiors to Paris. The boys and their parents, all wept for him as for a father, a brother, and a friend, and his praise was in every mouth. The superior of the Great Seminary, a man well qualified to discern true merit, used to say of him: "Father Perboyre is the most perfect man I know," and the Bishop of Saint Flour, who frequently allowed himself to be guided by his councils, was with difficulty induced to consent to his departure. As for himself, having no other desire than to

conform to the will of God, the most complete expression of which was to be found for him in the will of his superiors, he received the news of his removal with the most perfect equanimity. He was, besides, so profoundly convinced that anybody would be better fitted than himself to fill this onerous post, that he had even written to his superiors representing that the task was beyond his strength, and urging the weak state of his health. This latter consideration was certainly the only one that gave any force to the humble instances of the young superior.

It was just then vacation time, in the year 1832, and Father Perboyre thought it his duty to go and spend a few days with his family, to console his parents in a great affliction which had come upon them. His young brother Louis whom he was so fond of, and who like him had entered the Congregation of the Mission, had just died on his way to China, where he had hoped to preach the Gospel to the heathen. He succeeded so effectually in concealing the greatness of his own sorrow from the members of his family, that they came to look upon the event as a great favor, the young apostle having, as he told them, had the happiness of dying the death of the Saints, so precious in the eyes of

the Lord. On his return from this journey, Father Perboyre was recalled to the Mother-House; as prompt as he was simple in obedience he set out for Paris immediately.

## CHAPTER IV.

FATHER PERBOYRE IS GIVEN THE DIRECTION OF THE SEMINARY AT PARIS—HIS VOCATION FOR CHINA.

(1832-1835.)

He is given the direction of the novices—The success with which he acquitted himself of this duty—Father Girard's testimony—He is ravished in ecstasy—His ardent wish to go to China—His health prevents its realization—He redoubles his prayers, and finally obtains his wish—His farewell to the novices, and to his other brethren.

His aptitude for the formation of youth, as well as his singular learning and virtue, combined to suggest to his superiors the idea of employing Father Perboyre in the direction of novices at the Mother-House.

As soon as he arrived in Paris he was ordered to assist the Director of the Seminary, and even to replace him on occasions when his age and infirmities prevented his discharging his duties himself.

But the humble sub-director saw in this important and honorable position only a fresh motive for lowering himself still further in his own eyes, and imploring more fervently the help of Almighty God. The force of his example worked even more effectually than his earnest

and persuasive words, transforming the Seminary, as it were, into an "upper chamber," where fervor and regularity reigned supreme, and where flourished all those virtues of which Apostles are made.

This will seem less astonishing if taken in conjunction with the statement made by the holy Rev. Joseph Girard, one of his former novices, known in later years as the patriarch of the Algerian clergy, and who, loved and venerated by all, died a saintly death on the 19th April, 1879. It may be described as the homage rendered by one saint to another. "For many years I had longed to see a saint before my death. After reading the Lives of the Saints I fancied that their biographers were apologists who took pains to hide their defects in order to make them appear free from all imperfection or weakness, and though I had met many a deservedly esteemed man, in each one there was something lacking to make him like the canonized Saints of the church. At last, in the month of October, 1834, I made the acquaintance of Father Perboyre, and before long I was able to give thanks to God that I had really seen a Saint before my death. I used to say to my friends in Paris who did not know him, 'Now at last I have seen a Saint, and I know what a *live* Saint

is.' In truth Father Perboyre led the life of a Saint at the Seminary. He made a singular impression on me the first time I saw him. He was standing beside Father Etienne, but his cassock, though clean, was so poor, and his whole appearance so humble and modest that I took him for the lowest in the house. When Father Perboyre had left the room, I asked Father Etienne who that priest was, and he told me that he was the director of the novices. I had some difficulty in believing it, for there was nothing imposing about his personality; but I then set myself to study a man who, though apparently so humble, filled such an important office, and I soon saw that all his beauty was from within."

His habit was always the shabbiest in the Seminary, and no seminarist seeing him so forgetful of himself ever ventured to complain of his own.

It was his custom to expound the Epistles of St. Paul to us every Monday; what he said was always full of deep meaning, it was in fact St. Paul upon Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was, as a rule, the object of his discourses, but so deep and varied were his thoughts that he generally confined himself to the exposition of a single verse.

He was in all things a man of God, and one



who in no wise excited attention by his outward demeanor. He was naturally given to concealing himself, and this tendency was increased by the deep sense he entertained of his own incapacity. If a delicate question were put to him, he would delay before answering; his answers were never ready made to order, but he elaborated them with thought and prayer. In this way he seldom made a mistake, and his words were always full of wisdom. Gentle, firm and constant, he went straight to his point, though he did it very quietly. His patience was invincible. He talked little, rarely of others, and then always to their advantage, but he often spoke of God, and never of himself.

The most remarkable thing about Father Perboyre was that he had no faults. He stayed in many different houses, lived with many different brethren, but all who have ever known him might be questioned, and they would answer with one accord, "that he was absolutely devoid of any imperfection."

Another of his novices, Rev. A., afterward Superior of the Mission of St. A—, was one day witness of one of those exceptional favors with which God is sometimes pleased to honor his Saints.

He was serving Father Perboyre's Mass, when

at the moment of consecration he beheld him lifted up from the ground and ravished in ecstasy. When the Holy Sacrifice was over, the servant of God, alarmed in his humility, feared lest the young server should reveal what he had just witnessed, and on returning to the sacristy made him promise to preserve it as an inviolable secret. "I forbid you," he said, "ever to reveal to any one, as long as I live, what you have just seen."

The fortunate witness remained faithful to his promise as long as Father Perboyre lived: *Et enim sacramentum regis abscondere bonum est*, but after his death it was due to the glory of God to reveal His marvelous operations: *opera autem Dei revelare et confiteri honorificum est* (Tobias xii., 7); and we thus possess a fresh proof of the already eminent holiness of the humble director of the Seminary.

A master so accomplished himself was naturally well fitted to form apostolic men, and God granted him the happiness of seeing a great number of those whom he had trained going forth to the ends of the world to preach the good tidings, and to bring back erring souls to the way of salvation. But such a result as this, which he was far from attributing to his own merits, was not enough to satisfy his holy and

generous ambition. He wished to pay a tribute yet more immediate and more personal to those distant missions; and to water those heathen lands not only with the sweat of his brow, but even with his blood. This desire had been the mainspring of his vocation for the priesthood, and had finally determined his entrance into the Congregation of the Mission. Above all, the thought of martyrdom inflamed his generous heart, and the hope of finding it in China made him long eagerly to be sent thither. He loved to talk about Ven. Father Clet, another son of St. Vincent, who had died for the faith in those lands some fifteen years before, on the 17th February, 1820. "What a beautiful death that was of Father Clet," he said to one of his novices; "pray for me that my end may be like his." And another day, having called all the seminarists together in the conference room, he showed them a cord and a blood-stained habit, saying eagerly: "See, here is the habit belonging to a martyr—here is Father Clet's habit. Here is the cord with which he was strangled. How happy we should be if we might one day share the same fate." Then, as he left the assembly he called one of his novices aside and said to him, "Do pray for me that my health may get stronger, so that I may be able to go to

China and preach Jesus Christ and die for him.”

His health was, in fact, the great obstacle to the realization of his desires. For many years past it had been severely shaken, and everything seemed to indicate that even were he to start for China, he would be unable to support the fatigues of the journey, and like his brother Louis, would die before reaching his destination. For this reason his superiors had hitherto refused to yield to his petition. That Father Perboyre was deeply grieved by this refusal, there is little doubt; but far from blaming any one, he attributed it solely to his own sins, and still cherished a hope that some day his prayer might be granted.

Towards the beginning of the year 1835 he appeared to the eyes of his novices entirely absorbed by some grave preoccupation; his brow, ordinarily so serene, was overshadowed by a cloud; his prayers became longer and more frequent. The fact was, he had just heard of the approaching departure for China of some fresh missionaries, and he himself was not to be of their number. He, who for more than six years, while saying Mass, had entreated every morning at the moment of consecration, the favor of one day shedding his blood for

Jesus Christ, could not without grief see this new opportunity escape him, and he determined to do violence to Heaven in order to bring about his wishes.

At last, one day, urged by the grace of God, he threw himself at the feet of the Superior General, and begged him, with tears in his eyes, not to put any further obstacle in the way of his departure for China, whither God appeared to be calling him. Deeply touched, the venerable Superior raised him from the ground, and promised to let him go, provided that his council, whom he wished to consult previously on the subject, should show themselves favorably inclined. The majority of the council, however, declared that, considering the state of Father Perboyre's health, it would be exceedingly imprudent to allow him to depart, that it would be sending him to certain death, and represented that he did as much good in France as he could ever do in China, and even more. Rev. J. B. Etienne, then Procurator General of the Congregation, alone pronounced a contrary opinion, and begged that as far as the question of health was concerned, the matter might be referred to the decision of the house doctor. He was therefore consulted, and at once decided that if Father Perboyre started, it was

much to be feared he would die on the way. This reply put an end to all hesitation, and it was resolved that Father Perboyre should remain where he was.

It was, however, the eve of the Purification, and our future martyr began to implore Mary, whom he loved to style his good mother, not to abandon him in these difficult circumstances, but to intercede for him with her divine Son, who holds the hearts of all men in His hands, that this decision might be revoked. Strangely enough, that same day the doctor, although subject to no outward influence, began to repent of the advice he had given; the whole night through, he found it impossible so much as to close his eyes, and calm only returned to him when he had resolved to retract what he had said. And, in fact, as soon as morning dawned, he went off to St. Lazare and announced that he had no longer any opposition to offer to the departure of Father Perboyre, and that not only he saw no danger of immediate death for him in the journey, but that he even hoped it might have the effect of improving his health. The members of the council reversed their verdict, and Father Perboyre at last obtained the much longed for permission.

His joy was great, but calm and entirely

supernatural. He began by giving thanks to God, and to the Blessed Virgin, whose feast they were keeping that day, and to whose intercession he attributed this happy issue. Then he wrote to his uncle, and to his dear parents, to obtain their consent to this fresh sacrifice, rendered the more painful by his heroic determination not to go and visit them before leaving. Then very quietly he set about his own preparations for the journey, preparations consisting chiefly in prayer, and a good general confession made with the utmost care.

On the day fixed for his departure, the novices expressed a wish to listen for the last time to a master so deservedly revered, and so tenderly loved, and to receive a last blessing from one whom they were all longing to follow, and whom they looked upon as a saint already, and possibly a martyr in the future. But scarcely had he pronounced a few words, when his utterance was choked by an emotion induced even more by his humility than by the pain of separation. Penetrated with a deep sense of his own nothingness and misery, he came down from the pulpit, and, prostrating himself in the middle of the room, in presence of all the seminarists, he asked their pardon for the evil example he had given them, and for all the

negligences of which he said he had been guilty in the exercise of his duty. The spectators of this touching scene could only answer by their tears, and, throwing themselves on their knees in their turn, they entreated the humble missionary for his blessing. At last, yielding to their entreaties, he blessed them with fatherly affection, and then, after a few simple and friendly words, he took leave of them, recommending himself to their prayers, and promising not to forget them before God.

No less touching was his leave-taking of the other members of the community then present in the mother-house. They all assembled in the great quadrangle to receive his blessing; even the venerable Superior General, Father Salhorgne, himself coming down, notwithstanding his age and infirmities, to press the generous apostle for the last time to his heart, and thus render public testimony to the esteem and affection he bore him. Tears were in every one's eyes, and they all recommended themselves to the prayers of the saintly missionary. At last the moment arrived for separation, and M. Perboyre started for Havre, in company with two other young missionaries with whom he was to set sail for China.



## CHAPTER V.

THE JOURNEY FROM HAVRE TO MACAO, AND FROM MACAO  
TO HIS DESTINATION AT HONAN.

(1835-1836.)

Departure from Havre and first part of the voyage—A violent storm ensues—His health, his occupations, and the virtues he practised during the Voyage—He spends some time at Java—His arrival at Macao—His reception by his brethren in that place—Mutual edification—He studies the Chinese language—His holy indifference—Departure from Macao—The passage of the Kiang-Si—Halt at Hu-Peh, not far from the tomb of the Ven. Father Clet—Consolations and difficulties of the Journey—He arrives at Nan-Yang-Foo, his destination in the Province of Honan.

Father Perboyre reached Havre on Monday, March 16, 1835, and, together with his two companions and five other priests belonging to the Foreign Missions, embarked the following Friday on board the *Edmond*, a French ship bound for Java, and which was to set sail the following day. On Saturday, the 21st March, under the auspices of the Blessed Virgin, he left the shores of France, filled with that calm and sweet joy which grace alone knows how to instil. "I was marveling in my own mind," he says, in a description he gives of his journey to Batavia, "at the dispositions with which God

had inspired every one of us, when a recollection, tender and full of peace as a message from Heaven, came suddenly upon me. It was the remembrance of my brother Louis, who, not five years before, had set forth from the same port, on the same journey that we were about to undertake, and who had received his recompense and his crown before even arriving at the desired destination. I felt drawn to place our voyage under his special protection, and instantly my soul became buoyed up with confidence, and my eyes filled with sweet and delicious tears." The recollection of this never left him, and he wrote afterwards to his uncle: "It was impossible for me to make this journey to China without thinking of our dear Louis; I loved to picture him to myself walking before me, and pointing out the road I was to follow. Alas! he vanished half way, like the star which guided the wise men . . . . What joy to meet him again one day, shining with a fresh lustre, and showing me where to find the divine King, Jesus!"

The first days of the voyage were uncomfortable enough; the wind, though favorable, was very strong, causing the vessel to roll to such a degree that our travelers were forced to pay the usual tribute to the ocean. But after

the eighth day they sighted the island of Madeira, and it became calmer, so that the missionaries were able to say Mass almost every Sunday and feast-day. "Oh! how happy it makes one," writes Father Perboyre in the account of his journey already quoted, "to find oneself, in the midst of this great ocean desert, every now and again in the company of our dear Lord."

And in another letter to a cousin of his, he says: "Our Lord makes us forget all past troubles and fatigues, and we realize that what we do for Him is as nothing in comparison to what He has done for us." On Easter Day, April 17, they crossed the Equator, and a month later doubled the Cape of Good Hope without further difficulty.

But shortly afterwards, on the last day of the month of May, they encountered a storm so violent that it was only by the visible protection of the Blessed Virgin that they escaped at all. Father Perboyre gives the following account of in the letter already quoted: "On the 31st it May, between 60 and 70 degrees east longitude, we encountered the most violent tempest. Our captain, who had been at sea for thirty-six years, said he had never seen one like it. It raged with tremendous force for the space of twelve

hours; enormous waves swept over the bulwarks, and broke upon the deck, washing away everything that was not securely lashed to its place. One wave struck the vessel broadside with such force that all the ballast was thrown to one side of the hold, and as it broke over the poop it swept away the two men at the helm. Fortunately, they were not hurt, but one of the ship's boats was carried away and never seen again.

“We were filled by turns with terror and admiration at the sight of the huge waves that swelled up into mountains behind and before, shutting us in, as in a vast abyss, so that we could not help crying out with the prophet: *Mirabiles elationes maris, mirabilis in altis Dominus*—How admirable are the movements of the sea; how admirable is the Lord in the Heavens. Nevertheless we possessed our souls in peace, loving to abandon ourselves to the good pleasure of Him who is able to lead us to the gates of death and back again, and who willed to bring us all safe and sound out of this terrible danger. In the evening, all the missionaries recited in common the litany of the Blessed Virgin, the Ave Maris Stella, and the little prayer: ‘Oh, Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.’ Their confidence was

not in vain, for scarcely had they lifted up their hands toward the Star of the sea, than the storm began gradually to abate.”

This storm was the only incident worthy of note which occurred to break the monotony of the voyage between France and Java. They entered the Sunda Straits on Tuesday, 23d June, and on the following Friday arrived at Batavia.

Father Perboyre's health, which at the time of his departure had given rise to such serious anxiety, was fortunately none the worse for the journey, and he was able to stand, without too much fatigue, both the horrors of sea-sickness, and the heat of the tropics. The change of air seemed even to do him good, and he was less troubled by certain infirmities than he had been for many years past, thus verifying the words of the doctor who, contrary to all human expectation, had opened for him the way to China.

These first three months of the sea voyage were not time lost for Father Perboyre. He divided between prayer and study every moment that the discomforts of the journey left him free to dispose of. His favorite occupation was in reading the life of St. Vincent of Paul; but everything served to lift up his heart to God, whose greatness seemed to him so faithfully

mirrored in the immensity of the ocean. On the 18th July he wrote to his brother: "Before I had undertaken a sea voyage I never could think of the sea without a secret feeling of terror, but since I have been on board ship I have never felt the least fear, whether at the immensity of its extent, or the depth and movement of its waters. So it is that though now we tremble to appear before God, we shall one day taste upon His Breast the sweets of a repose hitherto unknown." He never allowed himself to indulge in useless conversations, and was generally to be seen either on his knees in his cabin, or sitting upon the deck, book in hand, or abandoning himself to the contemplation of the magnificent spectacle which lay before his eyes, or else speaking words of comfort and help to the sailors, who always listened to him with the most profound respect. It was specially noticed with what energy he resisted the attacks of seasickness from which he suffered most terribly at the beginning of the voyage. Those who have ever experienced it will know to what a state of prostration it reduces the system, and they will appreciate the efforts made by Father Perboyre when it is said that in the midst of the most violent sufferings he never allowed himself to lie down during the daytime or to inter-

rupt in any way his course of prayer and study. In fact, he was the admiration of both passengers and crew. "As for him," they used to say, "he is a real saint."

On their arrival at Batavia in the island of Java the missionaries had to leave the *Edmond* and embark on board the *Royal George*, an English ship bound for Macao. They weighed anchor on the 5th of July to go and take up cargo in the roads of Surabaya at the eastern extremity of the island. They reached Surabaya on the 14th, and were forced to remain there three weeks, a period which the holy travelers profited by to the utmost; going on shore only to say Mass, and spending the remainder of their time on board, after the fashion of the most fervent religious in their cells.

At last, having sailed from Surabaya on the 7th August, Father Perboyre arrived at Macao on the 29th of the same month, a Saturday, and the day on which the Church is accustomed to celebrate the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist. It seemed like a foreboding of the glorious death that was awaiting him in the country where he had just set foot. His joy was boundless when he found himself at last at the end of his voyage, and a few days after landing he wrote to Father Le Go, one of the assistants of the Con-

gregation. “*Here I am!* That is the password which was to be my first sign of life to you on arriving at Macao. Yes, *here I am*, and blessed be the Lord who has himself led and borne me hither. *Si sumpsero pennas meas diliculo et habitavero in extremis maris, etenim illuc manus tua deducit me et tenebit me dextera tua*—‘If I shall take to myself the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there, O Lord, Thy hand shall lead me, and Thy right hand shall uphold me.’ Although we were ready to make a journey a hundred times as long if obedience had required it, I can assure you that it was with no small contentment that we beheld the end of it, and our hearts were filled to overflowing when we set foot upon that land for which we had sighed so long.”

Father Perboyre received the most affectionate greeting from his brethren at Macao, and from their superior, Father Torrette, who had been ordained priest at the same time as himself. He was obliged to spend some months in this town, so as to acquaint himself with the Chinese language and customs, and this period he turned to account for the santification of his soul, turning it, as it were, into a long spiritual retreat. We gather this from a letter he wrote



to the priest who had succeeded him as master of novices in Paris: "Although our good God granted us many graces in the course of our long journey, it was not difficult to recognize the truth of the maxim; 'They who travel much rarely become saints: *Qui multum peregrinantur raro sanctificantur.*' We felt the need of solitude in order to recollect ourselves, and gain fresh strength both for soul and body, before entering upon our great campaign in the interior of China, and at Macao we found all that we could want in that respect. The good spirit and the fervor that reign in our Chinese Seminary have afforded us the same happiness that we felt in Paris. Here, as in Paris, simplicity and piety, modesty and quietness, humility and charity, have formed an earthly paradise which must have been lived in to be realized."

No less great was the edification he gave to others. All the attempts of Father Torrette to make him accept the special care and consideration which was due to his infirmities and his eminent virtue were forced to give way before his humility, and he succeeded in getting himself treated as the lowest of the missionaries. The Portuguese Lazarists who directed the diocesan seminary in the same town managed

to persuade him to spend a few days with them, and were so struck by his holiness that they could never after speak of him without tears.

His time was spent partly in exercises of piety and partly in learning the Chinese language, a study in which he encountered many difficulties both on account of his age and the constant headaches from which he suffered. "We have begun to study Chinese," he wrote to Father Le Go in the letter already quoted. "I am afraid it will take me a long time to learn if I am to judge from my first attempts. They say that Father Clet could only speak it with great difficulty. My life hitherto has borne some resemblance to his. God grant that I may carry to the end this resemblance to the revered brother whose apostolic life was crowned by the palm of martyrdom." Hard work and perseverance made amends for the facility that was wanting, and at the end of three months Father Perboyre was able to express himself tolerably well. He continued to devote to this study every moment which he could spare from his devotional exercises and the duties he was called upon to perform, and God so blessed his endeavors that he was soon able to preach, to hear confessions and to give catechism. More than this, in the course of the long and numer-

ous interrogatories to which he was subjected during his captivity, his judges marveled no less at his knowledge of their language than at the heroic courage he displayed in the midst of his sufferings.

Thus occupied, he patiently waited to have a mission assigned to him. "Are you not going to ask me," he wrote to Father Le Go, "what my destination in this new world is to be? I must own to complete ignorance on that point. For some time past my principal resolution has been the practice of holy indifference, and on arriving here I tried to hold more firmly to it than ever. The first few days, whenever I opened my Imitation at hazard, my eyes always fell upon these words: 'My son, let me do as I have a mind in your regard. I know what is best for you.' And then I hastened to reply by one of the following verses, 'Lord, provided that my will shall continue straight and firmly attached to Thine, do with me as it shall please Thee.' I love this mystery of Providence, which takes pleasure in making me live in this manner, from day to day. When the time comes, we shall each of us receive our mission, and I am not going to trouble myself as to which one will fall to my lot."

The time was not far off. The needs of

Honan called for such a missionary as divine Providence seemed to have prepared in Father Perboyre; and early in December he was destined for that mission.

It was on the 21st of December that Father Perboyre left Macao for his new destination, having to pass through many dangers of all sorts before arriving. He had to start at night, and to hide himself more than once in the course of the journey in order to escape the official visits of the Chinese authorities, and any indiscreet observation that might have compromised him; the laws of the Empire forbidding, under pain of death, any European to penetrate into the interior.

The first part of the journey was by sea, coasting along the provinces of Quang-Tong and Fo-Kien, following the endless indentations of the coast line, thus making the voyage both lengthy and monotonous. But Father Perboyre solaced the tedium of the journey by applying himself with increased ardor to the study of Chinese, contenting himself, as we find in one of his letters, with one meal at 9 o'clock in the morning and another at 7 at night, so as to devote more time to his studies.

At last, on the 22d of February, 1836, more than two months after leaving Macao, he ar-

rived at the town of Fuh-Ning, situated on the east coast of China, and at the northern extremity of the province of Fo-Kien. Leaving that town to his right, he penetrated into the interior of the country, and made a halt of some days at the residence of the Vicar Apostolic of that province, from whom he received the most cordial welcome. On March 15 he set off again for Kiang-Si, a province which he had to traverse at the cost of fresh fatigues and fresh dangers. Later on he wrote as follows to his uncle: "Traveling through a country whose language we could not speak, and with whose customs we were ill acquainted, we had to advance with all the uncertainty and caution of people who find themselves treading on a quicksand. But as our small stock of experience increased, and we found ourselves getting on with impunity, our boldness increased in like measure. Besides, the less confidence we were able to repose in ourselves and in our guides, the more absolutely did we place our trust in God."

This confidence was not misplaced, and having successfully passed all the custom houses, Father Perboyre arrived on the 15th of April at the Christian settlement of Hankow, near Woo-Chan-Foo, where he stopped for a day or two.

This country, already watered by the blood of one martyr, and where he himself was destined to shed his own for the faith, brought to his mind a very dear and a very glorious recollection. "The first office I said here," he wrote to his uncle, "was that of St. Cletus, Pope and martyr. Such a striking similarity of name was not needed to make me remember that I was on the same spot where our dear martyr, Father Clet, had given up his life for Jesus Christ. Oh! how ardently I longed to make a pilgrimage to his tomb, which was only two short leagues from the house where I was lodging, but it was judged more expedient to defer this to some future time." Divine Providence had decreed that this future time should only be after his own death, when, by a happy coincidence, he was to share the burial place of him whom he had so revered, and whose example he had so well imitated.

In the beginning of May Father Perboyre had the consolation of finding two of his brethren, Father Rameaux and Father Baldus, in the mountains. He remained some weeks with them, even accompanying them to their missions, and thinking himself fortunate in being able to model himself upon them and to profit by their experience. But soon the breaking out

of a persecution obliged them to separate in order more easily to avoid discovery, and Father Perboyre was forced to continue his journey alone. Let us hear his own account of its fatigues.

“I started in a Christian boat that had just been used by a mandarin. The journey lasted eight days, and I spent my time as usual in studying Chinese; on the 26th of June I left the river for good and all, and in company with the boatman began a new campaign on foot. My legs were weak from want of exercise in the boat, and that night I was very tired. The next day we had some ten leagues to go, through a very rough and mountainous country. After much trouble and many efforts I reached the foot of the last hill, but there my strength failed me and I could go no further. Looking at the hill I remembered that I had with me a little crucifix blessed with the Indulgence of the way of the Cross, and this seemed to me evidently the moment for gaining it. For some hours past I had only been able to drag myself along by the help of my umbrella, which was thus rendered useless as a protection against the rain which was falling in torrents. I used to sit down upon every stone I came across, and then started off to climb afresh, sometimes on my

hands and knees. If I may be permitted to say so, I would have climbed with my teeth, had that been necessary, to follow the path Divine Providence had traced for me. My poor guide was forced to treat me like a broken-down old horse, picking me up and hustling me along; but he was helped in his charitable labors by a young man, who came down the hill toward us. Several Christians were minding their flocks on these heights, and on seeing me they guessed who I was and came to meet me. As I had not been able to eat anything all day, their first idea was to make me take something, but I threw up almost immediately even the very little I was able to swallow. They comforted me by assuring me that they were all Christians in those mountains, and indeed in all the neighboring country. At last I reached the summit of that terrible hill, and on the other side I discovered, hidden in a grove of bamboos, our little residence, where Father Rameaux and one of the Chinese brethren received me with open arms. I soon forgot my fatigues in their company. . . . Father Baldus came in his turn to breathe the community atmosphere of our retreat, where we numbered as many as twenty persons, including missionaries, catechists, students, etc.”

But this time spent in the society of his breth-



ren, agreeable and useful though it was to him, came very quickly to an end. He was obliged to separate from his companions about the middle of July, and five days later, towards midnight, he reached the residence that had been assigned to him at Nan-Yang-Foo, which happened to be the very same house in which Father Clet had been arrested.

## CHAPTER VI.

HIS MISSIONS IN HONAN AND HU-PEH.

(1836-1839.)

His dispositions on arriving at Honan—Serious illness—His first missions—Labors and successes—Recollections of Father Clet—Vacation—He leaves the mission of Honan for Hu-Peh—New occupations—A Sunday, or feast day—Good use of his time—Privations and fatigues blessed by Almighty God—Painful interior trial—Appearance of Our Lord, who delivers him from it.

SIXTEEN months had passed since he left France, and Father Perboyre had traversed some eight thousand leagues of country. “I have traveled enough,” he wrote to his uncle on the 10th August, “to make me never wish for another long journey again, until I enter upon that one which is to be made neither by land nor by sea. But meantime I shall hardly be able to avoid long excursions into the interior of this vast China. I must do it, having come from so far for no other reason than to run about here. God grant that I may so run as to obtain the incorruptible crown: *Sic currite ut comprehendatis*” (1 Cor. ix. 24).

This last wish was destined to be fulfilled, and within a short period this valiant soldier of

Christ was to consummate his long and glorious career. Not being able to make all the progress he would have desired, he envied his fellow laborers the power that their more intimate knowledge of the language and customs of the country gave them, of procuring the glory of God and the salvation of souls. "I should like," he wrote on the 18th August, 1836, "to glean a few little ears, so as to have something to place beside the great sheaves of my brethren in the granary of our Father."

For a moment it seemed as though God, satisfied with his good intentions, was about to bestow on him his recompense. A serious illness laid him almost at death's door, and it was thought advisable to administer the last sacraments to him. He was saved, however, by the permission of Providence, and within three months his health was almost re-established. He applied himself afresh to the study of Chinese, and although he had not as yet quite recovered his strength, he undertook his first mission in company with a Chinese priest. The mission was a great success; the Christians whom he had been evangelizing were unable to resist the efforts of his zeal, and abandoning the evil ways into which they had fallen, they all came to their duties. Encouraged by this first

success he embarked regularly upon his missionary career, and his labors were blessed with much fruit. These happy results were, however, only obtained at the expense of a great deal of fatigue, as we may judge by the following extract from a letter written by him to the Director of the Seminary of the Congregation, 25th September, 1837:

“As soon as I had recovered my strength I undertook the administration of a Christian settlement in Honan, in company with one of our Chinese brethren. In order to visit fifteen hundred Christians scattered about in some twenty settlements, we had to journey for more than three hundred leagues, and to traverse the province in its entire breadth. This expedition lasted for six months. To give you some idea of it, I will go over the route with you. Imagine our residence and our starting point to be in the diocese of Cahors. We begin by giving a few missions in those parts, and then start off to give others in the dioceses of Albi, Puy, Autun, Orleans, Versailles and Amiens;—that will show you the relative positions of the districts and the distances we have had to traverse.

“As you may imagine, this is not done without some fatigue. We traveled sometimes on foot, or oftener in carts without springs, along

roads that are never repaired either by the government or by private individuals, generally starting from a Christian house in the night time and arriving at another also at night; our beards white with the frost of the winter mornings, our faces tanned and the skin peeling off our necks, ears and foreheads from the heat of the summer. I am not going to describe the ordinary Chinese inn to you; the picture, to be complete, would be too disgusting; I shall only remark that to any one eager for privations or mortifications it would prove a real treasure house. Still, one is glad enough to rest there and sleep a little after the fatigues of the day, even though the best bed they can furnish be a mat spread on the ground or on a little trestle.

“We were occasionally subjected to some annoyance on arriving at these inns, either from a police agent who wanted to take down our names and subject us to a cross-examination, or from some official who would force us to give up our lodging to him and seek hospitality for ourselves elsewhere. Having to keep up one’s character as a native of the country during these journeys is not the least of the many difficulties for a European missionary. In order not to betray himself he has to keep in the background, and leave the Christians who ac-

company him to speak and act, and even they, in spite of the precautions dictated by their prudence or fears, are not free from apprehension. But the missionary himself is so conscious of the liberty within his own heart that he is lifted up and filled with joy even in the midst of dangers.”

What also supported him was the memory of Father Clet, the glorious martyr with whom Divine Providence seemed already to have given him so many traits of resemblance, and whose death he regarded with envy. “Several times in the course of my journeyings,” he writes in the same letter, “I have either followed or crossed the roads along which this venerable brother of mine had passed, whilst he was being led about, loaded with chains, to the various tribunals in this province and in that of Hoo-Kwang, and I assure you it was not without emotion that I heard him spoken of by my fellow-travelers. As for me, I count myself happy to be able to labor in this same portion of the Lord’s vineyard that he cultivated with so much zeal and success, and his memory, lovingly cherished as it is here, is of no small advantage in inciting me to follow in his footsteps and carry on the good work he began.

“Our vacation is over for this year, if one

may call vacation a time spent in studying, hearing confessions, preaching, instructing our future seminarists, surrounded by a crowd of children, who come every day to learn their prayers and catechism. We are about to begin our annual retreat, and then we start on a fresh campaign. Pray God to bless our little work, to sanctify our labors and make them fruitful. Labors and sufferings are not wanting to a missionary, but they are so precious in the eyes of faith that it is well worth going even to the end of the world to seek them."

Two years had hardly been spent in this apostolic work in the province of Honan, when obedience obliged Father Perboyre to quit it for another field of labor. In this new district he had no longer any long and painful journeys to make, but his ministry subjected him to many sufferings and privations.

"In the month of January last," he wrote to his cousin on the 12th September, 1838, "I was recalled to Hu-Peh by Father Rameaux, superior of that mission. The district which I have since occupied, and which I have only quitted in order to visit two little Christian settlements a short distance off, is situated in the middle of the mountains. It embraces an area of two or three leagues in length and a little less in

breadth. The Christian population numbering in all about two thousand, interspersed with only a very few pagans, is divided into about fifteen settlements, but so scattered that there is nothing resembling even a small village. In the middle of the district is a small residence belonging to the mission. The missionary is like a priest in the centre of a large parish, in constant communication with all the Christians of the district. He is often sent for both by night and day to administer the sick, for the Chinese Christians are always most eager for the Sacraments at the least approach of danger. There is at all times, but especially on Sundays, or feast days, such a multitude of people for confession that three priests in constant attendance would find it difficult to satisfy all their wants.

“But it is especially on Sundays and feast days that the flock crowds round its pastor. From the beginning of the day to its close our Church is full of people. First of all we recite morning prayers in common, the prayers for the feast, and part of the Catechism; then they hear Mass, a sermon is preached and Catechism is given to the children. In the afternoon we say the Rosary, and the way of the Cross, and a conference takes place in which all take a part after



the simple and familiar method of St. Vincent of Paul. Add to all this confessions, baptisms, confirmations, marriages, admissions to the various confraternities, the granting of dispensations, the examination of the difficulties that present themselves in the different settlements, questions concerning doctrine, private instructions and exhortations, counsels and corrections, occasionally the performance of the duties of a magistrate, which it is not always possible to decline, and you will have some small idea of the occupations of a missionary on one of their Sundays or feast days.”

And in another letter to one of his companions, Father Aladel, dated the 10th August of the following year, 1839, he adds: “I have been settled in these mountains for the last two years, and I still continue to exercise my sacred ministry, the duties of which occupy me so completely that I have neither time to look backward nor forward. Between the Nativity of Our Lady of last year, and Whitsuntide this year, I undertook seventeen missions or visitations of Christian settlements, and I can not say that I have had a single moment’s respite since then. It is impossible for me to take a holiday, for we are in the midst of an immense number of Christians, who, for the most part, like to

come frequently to confession. If, for instance, I were able to hear a thousand or more confessions on this feast of the Assumption, I should find quite that number disposed to go. When the feast is over I shall make my retreat, and then I shall start off again to missionarize for a good part of the year."

To the fatigues of his sacred ministry were added the privations of a poor and mortified life. Having nothing but a dark, unhealthy house to live in, without a chimney and almost without windows, where it was impossible to light a fire without being enveloped in thick smoke; his food consisted for the most part of rice, or of herbs boiled in water without any seasoning, and his only bed was the bare ground or a mat spread upon a board. Besides this, the excessive heat and the continual torments of hunger and thirst increased his sufferings, in addition to the natural weakness of his constitution, and the many infirmities which he bore with the most admirable patience. And as though all this were not enough to satisfy his love of the Cross, he imposed upon himself the most rigorous penances, disciplining himself even unto blood, wearing a rough hair shirt and an iron chain about his loins. And to crown all, coming in contact as he continually did with

these poor Christians regardless of any of the obligations of cleanliness, he soon became covered with the same vermin as they themselves, and following the example of many saints, through a spirit of penance, he suffered himself to be, as it were, eaten up alive by them, taking no steps to guard against them or to free himself from such torture. The blessing of God rested visibly upon his ministry, giving him grace to instruct the ignorant, to convert sinners and apostates, to instil fresh fervor into the lukewarm, and to bestow upon all alike the strength to confess their faith if need be, in the midst of the greatest torments.

He, on his side, seemed to be preparing himself by the study of the Acts of the Apostles for the glorious struggle in which he was soon to engage. But our Lord, who, without doubt, found a delightful abode in this holy soul, had a mind to make this preparation even more entire and more perfect, by purifying the victim and causing him to pass through the crucible of a still more severe trial. Before enduring the sufferings of His passion in Jerusalem and on Calvary, He willed him to share also the anguish of His sorrowful agony in the Garden of Olives.

For several months Father Perboyre became

a prey to the most violent temptation to despair, in the same way as St. Francis of Sales had been tried whilst making his studies in Paris. He was persuaded that his name had been blotted out of the book of life, and that he was destined to burn for all eternity in hell, and there seemed to him nothing left to hope for, from the mercy of God. He could see in God nothing but a severe judge, rightly incensed against him, on account of his innumerable sins, and his abuse of so many graces. In vain did he pray; God seemed to reject his prayers and to repulse him with scorn and anger. His very crucifix, from which he was accustomed to derive such great consolation, seemed as if deaf, or rather from its sacred wounds as from so many mouths there seemed to issue reproaches and sentences of condemnation. He could find no relief to his sufferings either before the Tabernacle or in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, in which he imagined himself to be forever renewing the crime of Judas.

These sufferings were not slow to react upon his health; sleep fled from his eyelids, and all food speedily became distasteful to him. He seemed to grow paler day by day, and to wither away like a plant scorched by the burning sun, and he would doubtless have suc-

cumbed had not God Himself put an end to the trial.

But our Lord took pity upon his faithful servant, and deigning to appear to him, as it were, upon the Cross, He cast on him a look of unspeakable kindness, and said in loving accents: "Why do you fear? Did I not die for your sake? Put your hands into my sacred side, and do not fear but that you shall be saved." Then the vision disappeared, and the soul of the holy missionary was left full of a delicious peace, that nothing was able ever to disturb again.

It was remarked as a strange thing that from that moment the terrible emaciation caused by all he had undergone in this time of trial entirely disappeared, and the next day he was apparently in his usual health.

"He himself related this fact to me," said Father Baldus, "in the course of a conversation I had with him in our residence at Koutchen-Kieng, and I noticed that he spoke of the circumstance as having happened to a third person. To show him that I was not to be taken in by his pious dissimulation, I at once said to him, 'I know whom you are speaking of—this happened to yourself.' His embarrassment and evasive answers served to convince

me as much as a full avowal could have done."

This vision was like the apparition of the angel to our Lord in the grotto at the moment of his agony: *apparuit autem illi angelus confortans eum* (Luke, xxii. 43). It gave him strength and prepared him for the last terrible combat that was to bring his apostolic career to such a glorious end.

## CHAPTER VII.

HE IS ARRESTED—AND SUBJECTED TO VARIOUS EXAMINATIONS BEFORE BEING SENT TO WU-CHAN-FOO.

Persecution in Hu-Peh—The residence of the missionaries is pillaged and burned—Flight of the venerable servant of God—He is betrayed by one of his own people, taken up, and ill-treated—He is interrogated at Kwang-in-tam—Departure for Kou-tchen-Kieng—Kind action of a pagan—At Kou-tchen-Kieng he is brought up first before the military, then before the civil mandarin—He is taken to Siang-yang-fou and brought up before the governor of the town—He is then taken before a mandarin of the first order.

AT the time when Father Perboyre penetrated into the interior of China, there existed a law enacted in 1794 by the Emperor Kiang-Lung proscribing the Christian religion, and condemning to death any European, and to exile any Chinese subject who should make profession of it. The enforcement of this law had already been the cause of several persecutions, of which the most violent, after the one of 1805, took place in 1820, and obtained the palm of martyrdom for the venerable Father Clet.

For some time, however, the Christians, and those of Hu-Peh, in particular, had enjoyed tolerable tranquillity, when suddenly a fresh persecution was set on foot. It began in the

town of Nan-Kiang where several Christians were seized. Among these was a young man, the son of the catechist, Peng-Tim-Siang, who, terrified at the threats of the satellites and won over by their blandishments, miserably betrayed his brethren, giving their names and dwellings, and pointing out the places where they were accustomed to assemble with the missionaries. Instantly orders were given to the mandarin of Kou-tchen-Kieng to seize both the pastors and their flock. A company of soldiers led by two commissaries of the Viceroy of Wu-chan-foo, one civil and two military mandarins were dispatched to the residence of the missionaries at Tcha-Yuen-Kiu, a little town in the department of Kou-tchen-Kieng, near the market of Quang-in-Tam. Father Perboyre happened to be there in company with Father Baldus, a missionary of the Propaganda, on his way through the province of Hu-Peh, Father Joseph Rizzolati, an Italian capuchin, and a Chinese priest, Father Ouan, who had all assembled on the octave of the nativity, to celebrate together the feast of the Holy Name of Mary. It was a Sunday, 15th September, 1839, and all the Christians of the country round had come to hear Mass, and to assist at the other religious exercises which were to complete the celebration of Sunday. The



last Mass was just over, and a few of the faithful were still in the church with Father Perboyre, Father Baldus and Father Rizzolati. Suddenly a Christian of the name of Tom-tayoun rushed in and announced that the persecution had broken out, that the soldiers were marching upon the church under the leadership of the mandarins, and were only a short way off, adding that there was no time to lose, and that a speedy flight was the only means of insuring the safety of all.

Father Baldus and Father Rizzolati hastened to profit by this advice. But the intrepid servant of God could not make up his mind to abandon his beloved flock. In vain he strove to persuade himself and them that the danger was not so imminent, the soldiers were heard approaching, and the people all leaving him, fled. It was not until illusion was no longer possible, and that he perceived it would be rashness to expose his life any further, that he himself thought of flight. Gathering up as best he could the sacred objects he wished to save from profanation, he made his way out by a secret door just as the mandarin and his satellites rushed into the church. Furious at finding that their prey had escaped them they seized upon everything of value that they could find in

the church or in the mission house and finally set fire to all the books and papers they could lay hands on, but with so little precaution that the whole building was soon ablaze, and a mandarin himself only escaped with difficulty from the flames.

Meantime, the venerable servant of God had taken refuge in a forest of bamboo trees, some short way from the church, where he managed to conceal himself. When night fell he left his hiding-place and made his way to the house of the catechist Ly-tsou-hoa, where he got some food, of which he was sadly in need after all the fatigues and anxieties of the day, and having caused his beard to be cut off so that he might be less easily recognized as a European he was taken to spend the night at the house of another Christian some three hundred yards off.

Rather than compromise his hosts, the venerable fugitive left them before day-break next morning, 10th September, and sought shelter in a neighboring forest, accompanied by his servant, Thomas Sin Ly-Siam, another Christian named Ouan-Kouan-King, and Ly-Tse-Mim, father of the catechist.

He would have been safe in this retreat and secure from all detection had not Providence, in order to make him still more like his divine

model, willed that he also should be betrayed by one of his own people. The neophyte, Kiung-Lao-San, like a new Judas, was induced either by fear or avarice to reveal their place of concealment to the soldiers. Instantly surrounding the forest, they searched it through and through, like so many wild beasts looking for their prey. At last two of them came upon the servant of God and his three companions. Flight being impossible, and perceiving that they were superior to their assailants in point of numbers, Thomas proposed to his master that they should offer resistance. But he, recollecting that in the garden of Gethsemane Jesus would not suffer St. Peter to make use of his sword, forbade all violence to his brave and devoted follower. Thomas obeyed, and with the exception of Ly-Tse-Mim, who succeeded in making good his escape, all the Christians who had taken refuge in the forest fell into the hands of their enemies.

These latter hastened to surround the holy missionary, and falling upon him in their fury they seized him by his hair,\* and dragged him to the top of the neighboring hill. There they

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\*The Chinese as is well known are in the habit of letting their hair grow long behind, and plaiting it into the form of a long pig tail.

stripped him of all his clothes, leaving him only a few poor rags to cover him, tied his hands behind his back, and having given him three sword cuts across his shoulders, led him, loaded with chains, to the market town of Quang-In-Tam. Very patiently and bravely the servant of God bore all this ill-treatment, never allowing so much as a complaint or a cry of pain to escape him.

On arriving at Quang-In-Tam he was brought before the civil magistrate of the town of Koutchen-Kieng, who was there awaiting the prisoner. "It was heart-breaking to see him," an eye-witness relates, "clad in nothing but a dirty torn shirt and a pair of drawers, a chain round his neck and his hands fastened behind his back, surrounded by the soldiery, who were pulling his hair and his ears to force him to look at the mandarin before whom he was made to kneel."

On being questioned by the judge as to whether he was a European and the head of the false sect of the Christians, he replied at once, regardless of death or the repeated torments that might result from his avowal: "I am a European, and a Catholic missionary." The enraged mandarin caused him to be separated from his companions, loaded with fresh chains,

and carried with his hands and feet bound to the shop of a Pagan named Haou, proverbial for his cruelty which had gained him the surname of San-Pao-Tsou, or tiger to the third degree, and under whose care he was to pass the night. Eight men were chosen from among the richest of the place, who were supposed for that reason to be less easily induced to let the prisoner escape through hope of gain, and were commissioned to watch him through the night and guard him strictly until the following day. Early in the morning of Tuesday, 17th September, orders were given to the soldiers to convey their prisoner to Kou-tchen-Kieng, a town at some distance from Quang-In-Tam. But the venerable servant of God, worn out by the cruel treatment he had received, and exhausted by fatigue and hunger, was unable to make the journey on foot. The painful march had already begun, and the valiant athlete of Jesus Christ, passing through the middle of the market place, was being exposed to every sort of injury and outrage from the hostile crowd that surrounded him, when a Pagan named Lieu-Kioun-Lin, the syndic of the place, caught sight of him and was moved with compassion. Drawing near to the crowd, he requested to be allowed to have the prisoner transported on a

litter, and having obtained the necessary permission he himself paid the bearers and accompanied the litter as far as the town. This good action did not go unrewarded. Profoundly touched by the kindness shown him, the venerable servant of God affectionately thanked his benefactor, but his gratitude did not stop there. As soon as he had won his martyr's crown, as we shall show hereafter, he appeared to the charitable Pagan and obtained for him shortly before his death the grace of baptism.

On his arrival at Kou-tchen-Kieng where still greater torments awaited him, the servant of God was immediately carried before a military mandarin, who demanded of him who he was, and for what reason he had penetrated into the Chinese Empire. "I am a European," he replied, "and I am come here to spread the Catholic religion and to exhort all men to avoid evil and do good." The mandarin, but little touched by this solemn profession of faith, replied that he spoke falsely, and that his real object was to deceive the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire. But the servant of God replied only by silence to this affront. He scarcely condescended even to answer the proposal made to him to renounce his faith, contenting himself with expressing his horror at

their suggestion by a simple shake of the head. The mandarin, irritated at his silence, caused his satellites to strike him on the face, and after receiving a hundred blows with a bamboo he was thrown into prison. But no repose was vouchsafed to the poor frame already weakened by suffering, fresh tortures were inflicted on him, the brave-hearted confessor enduring everything with admirable sweetness and patience.

The following day he was led to the tribunal of the civil magistrate, and subjected to a fresh cross-examination. Among other things that had been carried off from the missionaries, were certain objects consecrated to the divine service. The mandarin caused these things to be fetched, and then taking one by one into his hands, the chalice, the missal, the sacred vestments and all that pertained to the holy sacrifice of the Mass, he asked the servant of God what they were used for.

He replied that they were used for offering a sacrifice to Almighty God. When they asked him whether he was a European and the head of a false and impious sect, he replied, "I am a European and a missionary, not of a false and impious sect, but of the one only true religion." Then pointing to the case of holy oils the man-

darin inquired whether it did not contain water extracted from the eyes of sick people that they had torn out.\* “Never,” he replied, “have I been guilty of such a crime.”

At last the mandarin sought to make him deny his faith by putting a crucifix on the ground and ordering him to trample it under foot. But the valiant confessor replied, “Though you should kill me, I would never deny my faith, or trample upon the cross.”

“If you do not conform,” continued the mandarin, “I shall have you put to death.”

“Very well,” he replied, “I shall account myself happy to die for my faith.”

At this the mandarin ordered him to receive forty blows with a heavy leather strap upon his cheeks, wounding and disfiguring his face in the most horrible manner. He was then led back to prison and given over to the satellites.

This was the third time that the servant of God had made a generous confession of his faith before his judges, without their having been able to draw from him a single word or act capable of being construed into a denial. Did it not seem as though God, satisfied with these

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\*This is one of the most widely spread prejudices against Christians among the Chinese.



proofs of his love, were already preparing his reward, and that the dauntless confessor was drawing nigh to that death so longingly desired, and so calmly and joyfully expected. But it was not to be; here below, still harder combats were to fall to his lot, just because a still more beautiful crown was awaiting him above.

After being interrogated several times by the civil and military mandarins at Kou-tchen-Kieng, in the midst of the most cruel tortures, the servant of God was taken by the soldiers to Siang-Yang-Foo, an important town situated at a distance of a hundred and forty leagues. The journey was made by water on the river Han-Cong, and was to him the occasion of renewed sufferings. Bound hand and foot he was thrown into a boat, separated from all the other Christian prisoners, and whilst they were given all they needed in the way of food and drink, he was denied any refreshment during the entire course of this long journey.

At last they arrived at Siang-Yang-Foo, and he was thrown into a horrible prison, where he remained some days, neither insults nor ill-treatment being spared him. On the appointed day he was brought before the governor of the town, who examined him afresh, putting the same questions concerning his position as a

European and a Catholic missionary, and receiving precisely the same answers. The mandarin then proposed to him to trample upon the crucifix which was laid down at his feet, but the servant of God answered sincerely and firmly, "That I shall never do."

Seeing that his threats were vain, the governor thought to gain his end more surely by employing such reasoning as is affected by so-called philosophers of the modern school.

"What do you gain," he asked, "by adoring God?"

"The salvation of my soul," replied the confessor, "and Heaven, where I hope to go when I die."

"Fool!" returned the mandarin; "have you ever beheld this paradise?" Then turning to the other Christian captives: "I will teach you," he said, "what Heaven is, and what hell is. Heaven means to be full of riches and honors in this life; but to lead a poor, miserable suffering life as you do at the present moment, that is hell." Having delivered this speech worthy of Epicurus himself, he closed the sitting and ordered the venerable servant of God to be led back to prison.

Ten days later he was taken before a magistrate of the highest rank in the same town, who

treated him with tolerable moderation, asking him only how long he had been in China, a question which Father Perboyre contrived to answer without in any way compromising the interests of religion.

A month had passed in the midst of these interrogatories which only served to add fresh lustre to the heroic patience of this servant of God, when it was judged advisable to remove him to Wu-Chan-Foo, the capital of the province of Hu-Peh, there to receive his final sentence.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## HIS SUFFERINGS AT WU-CHAN-FOO.

He is taken to Wu-Chan-Foo—He is cast into a horrible prison—He is examined twice before the criminal tribunal—He then appears before the President of the civil tribunal—His unworthy treatment at the hands of some apostate Christians—His prayer in the prison—Cruelty of the Viceroy of Wu-Chan-Foo—He subjects the servant of God to the most fearful tortures, all of which he endures with an heroic patience—After a month's interval fresh examinations and fresh sufferings—Touching proof of affection for the crucifix—He refuses to adore an idol—Derisive scene of which he is made the object—His unalterable patience amidst so much suffering makes them accuse him of magic—Last interrogatory, during which the Viceroy exhausts all his fury—State to which the generous confessor is reduced, when he is finally carried back to prison.

THE journey from Siang-Yang-Foo, to Wu-Chan-Foo was a long and painful one for Father Perboyre and his fellow captives, who, thanks to the example and the exhortations of the servant of God, had bravely persevered in their confession of faith. He whose only privilege consisted in a larger share of ill-treatment than fell to the lot of the others, distinguished himself from them by a more unalterable constancy and a more heroic patience. He was thrown into a boat, his neck, hands, and feet

loaded with chains and his arms fastened perpendicularly to an iron bar which hung from a collar of the same metal and impeded every movement. He was spared neither insult nor cruelty so long as the voyage lasted, and yet these sufferings might be described as light, in comparison with what was awaiting him at the end.

. On arriving at Wu-Chan-Foo the prisoners were presented to an inferior mandarin, who took down their names, and they were then led away to the fearful prison destined for the greatest criminals.

It would be difficult to conceive all that the servant of God endured in this horrible abode, which seemed to combine in itself everything that could make a prison intolerable, and wear out the most heroic patience. The insatiable cupidity of the jailors caused them to torture the prisoners with every refinement of barbarity in the hopes of extracting money from them, or of forcing their relations and friends to satisfy their avarice. The food was insufficient and the air impregnated with fetid vapors. As the prisoners were never allowed to go out, even for a moment, upon any pretence whatever, the state of the prison may be more easily imagined than described. From the accumulation of filth

which filled the place sprang a host of loathsome insects and filthy vermin which devoured the unprotected prisoners alive. At night, in order to prevent any attempt at escape, they were fastened by one foot to a species of wooden stocks, fixed into the wall. This inhuman measure added enormously to the rigors of their captivity. Not only was the circulation impeded in the limb thus numbed and kept absolutely immovable, but the poor sufferer, deprived of liberty of motion, was condemned to the most extreme discomfort. The consequence of this treatment resulted in the mortification of a part of Father Perboyre's foot, one of his toes withering completely away. The unutterable patience with which he accepted this suffering in addition to the rest, excited the admiration of his jailors, who became so much attached to him that they proposed to dispense with it as far as he was concerned. But finding that this exception was a cause of murmuring and misunderstanding on the part of his fellow prisoners, the venerable servant of God begged to be treated in the same way as the others, and resuming his fetters he bore them joyfully to the day of his death, that is to say, for the eight or nine months he spent in this species of hell.

But most painful of all to the servant of God

was the society of the miserable wretches amongst whom he was thrown, and who, familiar as they were with every kind of crime, put no restraint either upon their words or their actions, opening their mouths only to vomit forth the most obscene language interspersed with curses and blasphemies. To his pure mind this suffering was more intolerable than all the tortures inflicted on his body.

He never left this horrible abode except to appear before his judges, who, in Wu-Chan-Foo alone, interrogated him more than twenty separate times. He was brought first of all before the Criminal Court. After various questions similar to those which had been already put to him, and to which he again returned the same answers, he was ordered by the mandarin to renounce his faith. On his energetic refusal he was forced to kneel for the space of many hours, his bare knees resting upon iron chains and pieces of broken potsherd. Whilst he was in this position there chanced to pass by another confessor of the faith, Stanislas Tem-Ting-Fou, who, as he was being led before the same tribunal, entreated absolution of him. Father Perboyre instantly gave him absolution, making the sign of the cross over him in the presence of the whole assembly, thus fulfilling his office as

a merciful judge in presence of the iniquitous magistrates who were treating him with so much barbarity. Three days later Stanislas died in prison of his sufferings endured for the love of Christ. This was not the only opportunity vouchsafed to the servant of God of exercising in similar circumstances his sacred ministry of peace and reconciliation.

A short time after this first examination he was forced to appear a second time before the same mandarin, who again insisted upon knowing his motives for coming to China, and treated as folly the answers full of divine wisdom he received. He was then taken before the president of the Civil Court, who questioned him in like manner, thus giving the servant of God a fresh opportunity of confessing his faith, which he did with perfect firmness, refusing to betray the priests and faithful, whose names and dwellings they strove to make him disclose. He was then again made to kneel upon iron chains and his arms lifted up and fastened to a heavy piece of wood, which he was thus compelled to hold aloft from 9 o'clock in the morning until the evening. The satellites of the judge stood around with orders to beat him every time that his arms failed, or that he suffered the piece of wood to fall. Even this fresh torture, lengthy



and horrible as it was, failed to conquer the courageous confessor, who bore it with the same persistent patience and equanimity that he had shown all along.

The same mandarin took occasion of another examination to reproach him with having deceived the people by his tricks and with having brought upon the Christians, who were at that moment before the tribunal, all the evils which they were enduring. Then turning to them, with pretended compassion, he ordered them to renounce the deceptions of which they had been made the victims, and to punish him who had led them into error by tearing out his hair and spitting upon his face. Many of the Christians refused to lend themselves to these infamous suggestions, and made a courageous confession of their faith. But the remainder to the number of five were base enough to apostatize, and to obey the orders of the tyrant. Even this outrage, which he felt the more keenly that it was inflicted by his own brethren and children in the faith, was nevertheless borne by the servant of God with equal patience and sweetness, reproaching no one, and not allowing a word of complaint to escape his lips.

On returning to his prison he never failed to pour out his thanks to God for all the graces

He had bestowed upon him, entreating Him to pardon his executioners, and to give him strength to continue to the end. Prayer was to him what a sweet and refreshing dew is to a drooping flower; and from it he ever drew fresh strength to sustain the renewed combats to which he was exposed.

This supernatural strength was to stand him in good stead at the tribunal of the Viceroy, before whom he had not as yet appeared, but who was about to put his patience to a very rude test and so prepare for him a glorious occasion of triumph. This man was famous throughout the empire for his ferocious cruelty. At the sight of the criminals, that were brought up before him, he would burst into a fit of anger and treat them with a barbarity that was almost incredible. Blinded at times by fury, he would forget both his rank and his dignity, and springing from his seat he would throw himself upon the prisoners, and with his own hands tear out their eyes. But when he had to deal with Christians his fury knew no restraint, he hated them with a fiendish hatred, and had sworn to extirpate their sect from the whole of the province.

The servant of God was, therefore, brought up before this brutal man, and in reply to his

questions acknowledged himself to be a priest of the Christian religion and confessed his faith anew with a firm and calm dignity. The Viceroy then caused a beautifully painted picture of the Blessed Virgin to be brought, one that had been taken from the missionaries at the time their house was plundered, and accused the servant of God of having manufactured the colors which were used for painting the picture, from the eyes of sick people which he had torn out for this purpose. When he replied that he had never been guilty of such a crime he ordered him, by way of punishment, to be hung up by the hair for the space of some hours.

It would be impossible to describe the refinements of cruelty invented by this monster in the hope of exhausting the patience of the holy missionary and forcing him to deny his faith and denounce the other priests and Christians of his acquaintance. On one occasion he was suspended by his hands to a kind of cross from which he was left hanging from nine o'clock in the morning until evening. At another time they bound him to a huge machine which lifted him up into the air by means of cords and pulleys, only to let him fall again with his whole weight upon the ground, so that his entire frame was, as it were, shattered, and his bones dis-

located. Again they would force him to kneel upon iron chains, and whilst in this position, hanging by his hair from a beam, his arms extended and forcibly held in the form of a cross by means of a rope fastened to a piece of wood, they would balance a beam across his legs with a man standing on either extremity, thus causing the sufferer the most intense agony.

In order to vary the torture they sometimes placed him upon a seat so high that his feet were unable to touch the ground, fastening him down with ropes passed tightly round his thighs, and then hanging enormous weights from his feet which occasioned the most intolerable pain in his knees. At other times, on the contrary, the seat was placed so that his feet rested on the ground but then they would force huge stones under the soles of his feet, so that the pain was scarcely less severe. On another occasion they branded the words *Sie-Kiao-Ho-Tchoun*, signifying *propagator of an abominable sect*, with a red-hot iron on his forehead.

The servant of God was so weakened at the close of each of these painful interrogatories that he could neither walk nor stand, and they were obliged to make use of a hand-barrow to convey him back to prison. But throughout all his sufferings he lost nothing of his calmness or se-

renity. Not only was he never heard to utter a complaint nor a cry of pain but the supernatural joy with which his heart was filled seemed to shine forth from his countenance.

Seeing the state of exhaustion to which his victim was reduced, the Viceroy determined to allow him a month's respite, to give him an opportunity of recruiting his strength so that he might wreak his insatiable rage still further upon him.

At the expiration of this period the servant of God reappeared before his persecutor, who demanded of him by what route he had penetrated into the interior of China, at what houses he had stayed, and who the people were who had favored his entry. Failing to extract a single word from the prudent and charitable missionary, he ordered him to receive fifteen blows on the face with a thick leathern ferule. Then he inquired of him what the mysterious beverage was which he administered to the Christians in order to make them insensible to all tortures, for many of them, so far, had remained true to their faith. When the servant of God replied simply that he had given them no beverage whatever, he was rewarded with ten more blows of the same ferule.

Upon asking whether a woman named Anna Kao was not employed in his service, and on

receiving a reply in the negative, he made him kneel upon iron chains, with his hands fastened up to a beam, while one of his satellites dragged him up and down by the hair.

After an hour of this torture he showed him the case of holy oils, and inquired: "Is not this the beverage with which you bewitch the Christians, and prevent their renouncing their religion?" "That is not a beverage," replied the confessor, whereupon he received forty blows with a bamboo upon his thighs.

Several times in the course of the examination the Viceroy summoned him to declare the names and dwellings of the priests, Christians and catechists, but he invariably observed a profound silence. They struck him on the face, and heaped outrages upon him to force him to speak; they put him to the torture, and cruelly scourged him, but nothing could make him open his mouth. A mandarin, however, having asked him whether he was a Christian, he answered at once, saying, "Yes, I am a Christian, and I glory in it." The mandarin then brought a crucifix and placed it before him, saying "If you will only trample upon this I will give you your liberty." At this impious proposition the confessor cried out with his eyes full of tears: "Ah! how could I commit this

outrage against my God, my Creator and my Saviour?" And painfully stooping down, for his body was all bruised and torn, he seized the sacred image, and letting his tears fall upon it he pressed it to his heart and to his lips, covering it with tender and loving kisses. On seeing this, one of the attendants, seized with a sudden inspiration from hell, darted forward and snatching the sacred image of the Saviour outraged it in the vilest manner. Heart-broken at this horrible profanation, the chaste missionary gave vent to a cry of anguish, thus showing that he was more sensitive to an injury offered to his God than to his own sufferings. A hundred and ten blows with the *pant-se*\* were the reward of this admirable profession of faith. Another mandarin, desirous of showing him some compassion, urged him quietly just to tread upon some crosses that had been painted upon the floor, promising to save him if he would consent. "I can not do it," the servant of God replied firmly but simply. When the attendants seized him in accordance with their orders to force him to tread upon the crosses,

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\*The *pant-se* is an instrument of torture used in China, and consisting of a long thick bamboo. The sufferer is laid on the face on the ground and beaten about the loins with this stick.

he cried with a loud voice, "I am a Christian, and it is not I, but you who are profaning this sign of our redemption." The impious judge then sent for an idol, and promised the confessor his liberty if he would but adore it. He replied firmly, "You may cut off my head if you will, but I will never consent to adore an idol."

Mockery was next to be added by the mandarin to the cruelty and impiety he had already shown. Sending for the sacred vestments that had been taken from the missionaries when their house was pillaged, he commanded Father Perboyre to put them on. He was silent for a moment and seemed to be inwardly reflecting; then looking the mandarin calmly in the face he said that he would obey him. He had been thinking, doubtless, of the scene of mockery to which our Lord had willingly exposed Himself at the court of Herod and again in the Pretorium before Pilate, and he counted himself happy in being able to drink after Him of the same chalice of humiliation. Scarcely was he arrayed in the priestly vestments than a great clamor arose throughout the assembly. "It is the God Fo, the God Fo himself in person!" shouted judges and attendants with one voice.

When he had heaped sufficient insults upon the servant of God, the mandarin, returning to



the holy oils, and to the calumnies already so often reiterated with regard to them, attempted to force the missionary to own himself guilty of the crimes imputed to him. On his refusal he received forty blows with a bamboo. Worn out by this cruel treatment, he lay with closed eyes unable either to stand or kneel, till the attendants, seizing him by the hair, lifted him up bodily, only to let him fall again as before, then forcing his eyes open they obliged him to look at the Viceroy, who again asked him how many people's eyes he had torn out. He answered that he had never committed such a crime, whereupon ten blows were administered, which he bore with the same wonderful patience as before. The Viceroy, astounded, and incapable of understanding how any man would endure such sufferings with such perfect calmness, began to suspect that he had some secret which rendered him insensible to pain. Ten more blows failing to disturb the sufferer's equanimity, he questioned him further, and receiving no reply, whether because the servant of God was unable to speak or because he considered it useless to refute the same charges over and over again, he ordered his satellites to deal him fifteen more blows. His victim still kept silence. "What?" he cried, "I have had you

beaten, and still you do not answer?" This heroic silence confirmed him in the suspicion that the missionary wore about him some charm to render him proof against all pain, and in order to discover it he caused him to be stripped of his garments. A bandage, which, in consequence of some infirmity, the servant of God had been obliged to wear for some years, appeared to the tyrant to be the magic talisman he was in search of. Accordingly, despite the protestations of the servant of God and the evidences of his infirmity, he ruthlessly ordered the appliance to be torn off, and then to destroy the pretended charm he made use of a specific much in vogue amongst other Chinese superstitions; he had a dog killed, and having smeared the still reeking blood over the confessor's head, forced him to drink the remainder. Finally, as though to append his signature to this array of cruelties, he caused his mandarin's seal to be imprinted on the legs of the sufferer.

After this long and terrible interrogatory, the servant of God, who seemed to have scarcely a spark of life left, was carried back to prison. On the morrow, however, he was again brought before the tribunal, there to suffer still more. Furious at having been baffled by him on the

preceding day, the Viceroy put the same questions to him as before, declaring that he would soon find a way to make him acknowledge all his crimes. The servant of God replied that he had nothing to add to what he had already said. At a sign from the mandarin he was instantly stripped, laid upon the ground, and ten blows dealt him with a stick upon the back. Again the mandarin repeated his calumnies, adding a host of insidious questions which remained, as before, unanswered. Ten more blows were then given to him with the remark that he was mistaken if he hoped to die speedily, they would go on torturing him every day, and death should only come when every other torment had been exhausted. With that the mandarin ordered him to be extended on the rack, where he remained for an hour, whilst the executioners applied fresh tortures. At the end of that time they laid him almost dead at the feet of the Viceroy, who demanded of him ironically whether he felt well, and his satellites forced his eyes open to make him look at his persecutor.

Still the tyrant was not satisfied. He was determined at all costs to vanquish the constancy of the martyr, and urged him again to answer his questions satisfactorily, and own himself guilty of the crimes laid to his charge. He

could extort no answer. Exasperated by this silence, they literally rained blows upon the saintly missionary, whose heroic firmness, however, still remained proof against both the rod and the lash. Beside himself with rage at the sight of such invincible constancy the Viceroy sprang from his seat, and fearing lest the executioners were too gentle in their treatment, he took the murderous lash into his own hands, and, rushing upon his victim, discharged upon him a shower of blows with such savage violence that the spectators thought death must inevitably follow, and that quickly. This deed of ferocity revolted even the pagans themselves, and both the mandarins and their satellites alike protested against such cruelty, inflicted upon a man unconvicted of any crime, and whose patience and sweetness they could not choose but admire.

The holy confessor, who on that day alone, according to the evidence of the attendants, had received more than two hundred blows, was carried back to prison. The jailors, on seeing the state in which he was, were moved with compassion and hastened to take off his clothes and wash them of the blood that had soaked them through, lest they should adhere to the torn flesh beneath. The catechist, Andrew Fong, who saw him in the prison whilst his

garments were being taken off, avers that his face was swollen to a prodigious size, his flesh so bruised and lacerated with blows that it was literally hanging about him in shreds, and that large pieces had been torn off; in fine, his whole body was one vast wound, and like our blessed Saviour in His passion, it might be said of him that he wore no longer the semblance of a man. But within this crushed and mangled body the saintly soul of the confessor was upheld by a divine fortitude, enabling him to bear his sufferings with a marvelous serenity; and the expression that lit up his bruised and bleeding features proved sufficiently how happy he esteemed himself to have been judged worthy to suffer something for the name of Jesus. When the catechist Fong returned to the prison he found the servant of God on his knees in prayer.

## CHAPTER IX.

DEATH OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD.

(11TH SEPTEMBER, 1840.)

He energetically resists the last efforts made by the Viceroy to induce him to apostatize—He remains in prison eight months, awaiting the ratification of his sentence of death by the Emperor—He is able to go to Confession, and to send news of himself to his Brethren—Alleviations granted to him in his sufferings—He is unable to receive Holy Communion—The admiration of his fellow prisoners for him—He rejoices in his sufferings—The imperial ratification arrives, and he is instantly led out to execution—His last moments, his glorious martyrdom—His body becomes an object of astonishment and admiration—Device resorted to in order to obtain possession of his relics, and render them the last honors—He is buried near the Venerable Father Clet.

It was now the middle of January, 1840, and his judges, fairly conquered by the invincible patience of the venerable confessor, determined to put an end to a struggle, the result of which was so little to their credit. The Viceroy, however, before pronouncing sentence upon him, made one more attempt to force him to apostatize, together with the other Christians, who, like him, had generously persevered in their faith. One of their number gives the following account of what passed:

“ On being brought before his tribunal the

Viceroy spoke to us as follows: ‘Your sentence is about to be pronounced. You, Tong-Ouen-Sio (the Chinese name of Father Perboyre) shall be strangled, and you others who have never ceased disobeying the orders of your superiors, and who will not renounce your errors, shall be banished. I will, however, make one more attempt to save you. Deny your faith and you shall be instantly set free—if not, you shall receive the punishment you deserve.’ The venerable servant of God answered first, and said, ‘I will sooner die than renounce my faith,’ and we all replied in like manner. The Viceroy enraged at our constancy went on: ‘What? you refuse to renounce your errors? Well then, sign your own condemnation, and with your own hand make the sign of the cross upon this sheet of paper.’ The servant of God at once took the Chinese pencil presented to him, and traced a cross upon the paper. We then did the same.”

As a sentence of death would not be carried into execution without being first ratified by the Emperor, Father Perboyre was obliged to await in prison another eight months, the formal orders from Peking. It is difficult to understand how he ever survived so many sufferings, his body being lacerated, his flesh hanging in

pieces, his bones exposed to view, and immured in a loathsome den, where, unable to sit or stand, he was compelled for the most part to lie upon the ground.

The strict watch, however, that had been hitherto kept over him to prevent any communication without, was now somewhat relaxed, and a few Christians were able to make their way to him. Father Perboyre took advantage of this to beg that a priest might be brought to administer to him the consolations of religion. His request was granted, and one of his Chinese brethren succeeded in penetrating into his prison. But what a spectacle met his eyes on entering. At the sight of the generous confessor stretched out half-dead upon the ground, his mangled frame covered with livid wounds, he burst into tears, and it was with difficulty that he succeeded in mastering his emotion so far as to utter a few words.

The servant of God took advantage of this short interview to go to confession, and to send news of himself to his brethren in a little letter written in Latin, and stained with the blood that flowed from his wounded hands. This is what he wrote:

“The circumstances of time and place prevent me from giving you many details of my



position, besides you will hear of me from other sources. After I had arrived at Kou-Tchen-Kieng I was treated with tolerable humanity as long as I stayed there, though I was made to undergo two examinations, during one of which I was forced to kneel for half a day upon iron chains, and hung up to the *hant-sé*.<sup>\*</sup> At Wu-Chan-Foo I was interrogated no less than twenty times, and I suffered various tortures on nearly every occasion, because I would not tell what the mandarins wanted to know.<sup>†</sup> If I had told them, a general persecution would have broken out throughout the Empire. However, what I suffered at Siang-Yang-Fou was immediately for the cause of religion. At Wu-Chan-Foo I received a hundred and ten blows of the *pant-sé*, because I refused to trample on the cross. Later on you will know more details. Of about twenty Christians who were taken up and tried at the same time as myself, two-thirds publicly apostatized.”

From that time forth the confessor of the faith

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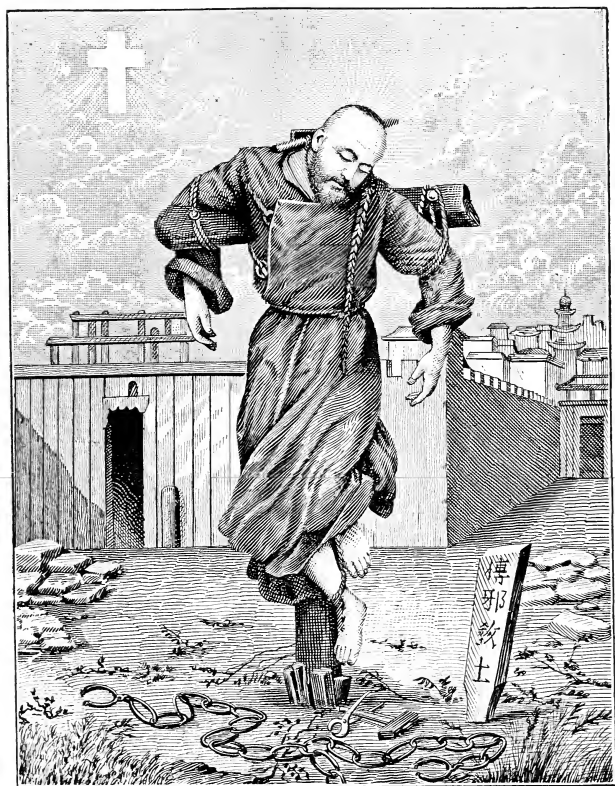
<sup>\*</sup>This is the name of a machine, placed above the head of the sufferer, and to which his two thumbs are fastened, together with his hair. Thus suspended, with his bare knees resting upon iron chains, it is impossible to make the smallest movement without horrible pain.

<sup>†</sup>The mandarins wanted to know the names and abodes of the missionaries, catechists and Christians.

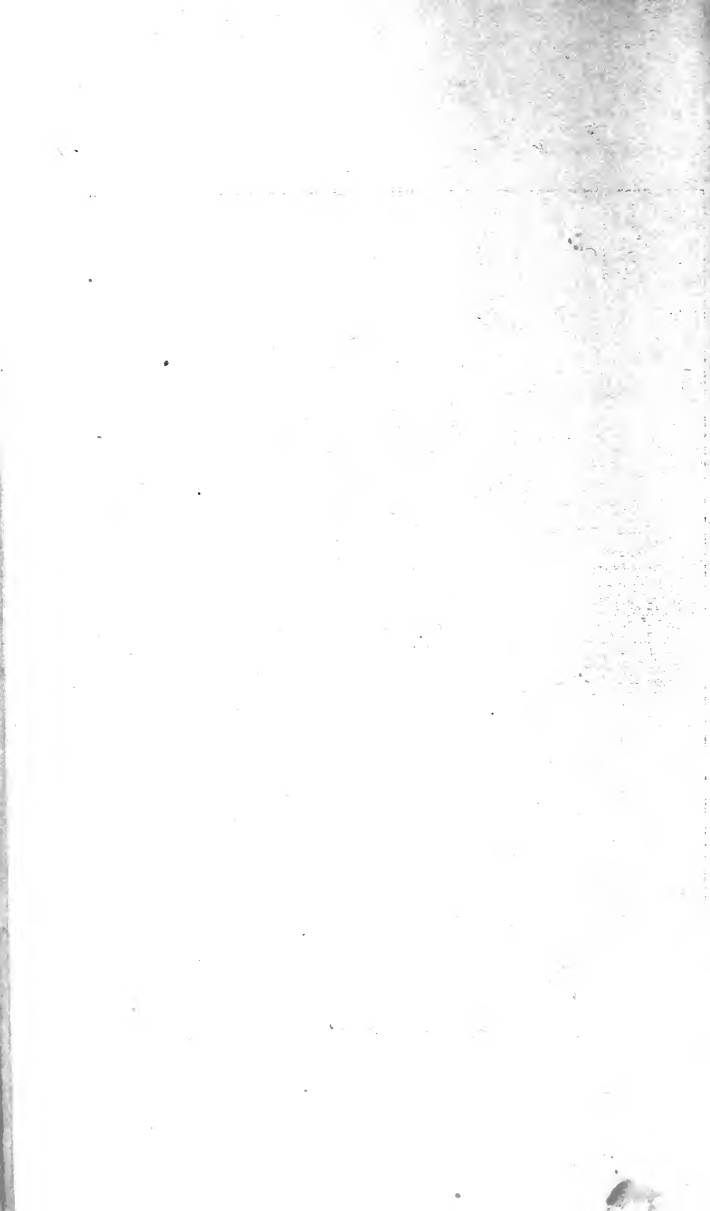
was frequently visited by the Christians, and more especially by the catechist Andrew Fong, who was able to render him numberless services. He was even tended with much pains and care by a pagan doctor, who, touched by his patience and sweetness, took a great interest in him. He was also allowed clothes, a mattress and a rug, all of which helped to alleviate the hardships of his imprisonment.

There was, however, a food for which he sighed with all the greater ardor that for many months it had been denied him, the Holy Eucharist. But it was impossible to convey this Heavenly Bread to him without serious risk of profanation, for fearing lest he might take poison privately, and thus escape the death they were preparing for him, his jailors had orders to taste everything that was brought to him. He was obliged, therefore, to deny himself this consolation, a privation not the least acute of the many entailed on him by his captivity.

The charm which the holy servant of God exercised over all who came in contact with him extended itself to his fellow prisoners. These men, taken as they were from among the lowest criminals, with hearts hardened by every kind of crime, were unable to remain day after day



THE MARTYRDOM—SEPTEMBER 11TH 1840.



witnesses of his saintly life, and in especial of his perfect modesty, without being struck with admiration at the sight of so much goodness. Feelings of esteem and respect forced themselves into their hearts, perhaps for the first time in all their lives, and they compassionated him aloud, fearlessly declaring that he deserved better things.

As for himself, far from considering his situation as one worthy of pity, he could not rejoice sufficiently over his own happiness; the sufferings which filled both his nights and days had a sacred charm for him, for he knew they increased his likeness to his divine Model. The only thing now left him to wish for was, as the great apostle says, to see those bonds released which held him back from the sole object of his affections, *desiderium habens dissolvi et esse cum Christo*. (Phil. i. 23.)

The moment was now approaching when this wish was to be realized. On the 11th September, 1840, an imperial courier arrived bearing with him an edict sanctioning the sentence of death which had been passed and which, according to the custom established in China, was to be put into execution immediately. At once, therefore, and without waiting to publish the decree, the servant of God was brought forth

from his prison. It was on a Friday, and by a dispensation of Providence, as though to signalize yet more closely his resemblance to his Divine Master, in order to add to the ignominy of his death, he was led to execution along with five other criminals: *Et cum sceleratis reputatus est.* (Is. liii., 12.) For some unknown reason the sentence was never made public, so that the Christians, ignorant of what was going on, were unable to assist at the execution. There was only one who by chance happened to encounter the cortège on its way, and to him we owe the following details.

The venerable servant of God walked bare-foot clad in nothing but a pair of drawers and the red robe worn by those who were condemned to death. His hands were tied behind his back, and made to hold a long stick, from the top of which hung a banner with the sentence of death written upon it: *et imposuerunt super caput ejus causam ipsius scriptam.* (Matt. xxvii., 37.) But the most extraordinary thing was that he seemed suddenly to have recovered all his strength, his wounds were no longer visible, and his flesh had become like that of a little child. His face, resplendent with beauty and a supernatural radiance, displayed a holy joy, and his lips murmured prayers as he went along.

It is the custom in China to hurry off prisoners to execution at a run. Each of the condemned is accompanied by two attendants, who drag rather than lead him. This hurried march, joined to the clanging of cymbals, imparts a character of terror to an execution which strikes awe into the Chinese mind. In this manner the holy confessor arrived at the spot where he was to consummate his sacrifice. The Pagans, warned of the event by the sound of the cymbals, rushed in crowds to the place, but knowing the patience and sweetness which the servant of God had exercised in the midst of his torments and in his horrible prison, they murmured at the death of one whose goodness, they said, rendered him equal to the gods.

Meantime, whilst awaiting the moment of execution, he knelt upon the ground in prayer. The very Pagans were touched at the sight of his calm and devout attitude, and the Christian, who was present and who had to put his hands before his face to conceal his tears, heard them saying: "Look at that European; he is kneeling down and praying!"

At last, when the five criminals who had accompanied him had been beheaded, it came to the turn of the servant of God. But his death was to be a longer and more painful one. The

executioner began by stripping off the red garment they had put upon him, leaving only his drawers, and then bound him to a gibbet in the form of a cross. His two hands, dragged round behind him, were fastened to the transverse piece, and his knees bent so that he had the appearance of a man kneeling, five or six inches off the ground. The executioner then put the cord round his neck, the ends being fastened to a stick to enable him to give the fatal twist. But, the better to make his victim feel all the horrors of death, he pretended to twist the cord twice before finally giving the decisive wrench the third time. One of the attendants seeing that life still lingered gave the finishing blow by a fierce kick in the lower part of the body. This circumstance involuntarily reminds one of the centurion's lance that opened the side of our Lord, and adds one more to the many striking traits of resemblance between the Passion of the Master and that of His faithful disciple. Like Jesus Christ, Father Perboyre was betrayed by one of his own friends, dragged from one tribunal to another, and subjected to every sort of injury and insult, without a murmur or a word of complaint, and like Him, too, he was condemned to death unjustly, led to execution together with



notorious evil-doers, treated even more cruelly than they, and finally, on a Friday, fastened to a cross, whence he gave up his beautiful soul to God. Ah, holy martyr! can we doubt it? here below, in the midst of sufferings, thou didst gloriously confess Christ Jesus, thou didst share his life of suffering and humiliation and shed thy blood for His love; in Heaven thou shalt share His eternal triumph: *si compatimur ut et conglorificemur!* (Rom. viii., 17.)

This conviction was already rooted in the minds of all who had known him during life, witnessed his constancy in the midst of so many torments, and who now saw the extraordinary signs by which it pleased God to glorify his servant. As soon as he had breathed his last, his body became an object of wonder and admiration. Far from presenting the aspect of horror common to the bodies of those who have suffered death from strangulation, it shone with a surpassing beauty, far exceeding anything it had ever worn in life. His face was not livid but fair and fresh-colored, and his eyes, instead of starting from their sockets, were modestly cast down. His tongue did not protrude from his mouth, but the lips were closed and seemed to smile. In fine, his members bore no longer any trace of the cruel treat-

ment they had undergone, while a resplendent halo shone round his head, the lustre of which was seen and testified to by many eye-witnesses. A Pagan was so struck by these marvelous manifestations that he at once became a convert to Christianity.

These prodigies were the more easily confirmed owing to an order from the Viceroy directing that the holy bodies should be left exposed upon the gibbet until the following day. The Christians took advantage of this interval to purchase from the attendants the garments of the martyr, and above all, his sacred remains. In order to secure the latter, and at the same time to avoid the risk of compromising any one, it was necessary to have recourse to an expedient, to which those who were charged with the burial were bribed to consent. Laden with the precious burden of whose real value they recked so little, they contrived to go by an unfrequented by-path to the place of burial and stopped on the way at a house that had been pointed out to them. There they found a coffin filled with earth, which they carried off, leaving in exchange the one containing the remains of the venerable servant of God. The Christians hastened to wash respectfully and lovingly those members that had suffered so much for Jesus

Christ, and clothed them in rich and precious vestments which they had spent all the previous night in preparing.

Having rendered the last sacred rites to the sainted body, they buried it upon the slope of the Red Mountain, beside the brother in arms who had preceded him twenty years before, in the glorious career of martyrdom. It will be remembered how Father Perboyre on first passing by Woo-chan-Foo on his way to Hankow had desired to visit this tomb. But Providence had interposed and had rendered his design impossible of execution, preferring to wait until after death to unite the souls of the two martyrs in Heaven, and their two bodies on earth in the same tomb. It was thus that death brought together these two venerable servants of God—Jean François Régis Clet and John Gabriel Perboyre—between whom in life there had been such a marked resemblance, and whose virtues had rendered them so pleasing to God, to His Angels and to men: *Amabiles in vitâ suâ in morte quoque non sunt divisi.* (II Reg., 1-23.)

A pilgrim who, a year afterwards, had the happiness of praying beside this tomb wrote as follows: “There is no sculptured marble to be seen over the earth that covers the bones of

these two glorious sons of St. Vincent of Paul, but God seems to have taken upon Himself the care of their sepulchre. There are thorny trailing plants, somewhat similar to our European Acacia, growing over their tombs. From out of this mass of verdure rises a profusion of mimosas of surpassing beauty and freshness. On seeing these brilliant blossoms springing from a thick undergrowth of thorns one is led involuntarily to reflect on the glory which in Heaven is to crown the sufferings of the martyrs."

## CHAPTER X.

THE VENERATION PAID TO FATHER PERBOYRE AND THE  
WONDERFUL EVENTS WHICH SANCTIONED IT  
AFTER HIS DEATH.

(1840-1885.)

The veneration which Father Perboyre inspired during life, and which after his death became a real cultus—Appearance of a luminous cross—The servant of God appears in person to a Pagan, who is converted—Wonderful cure of Sister Antoinette Vincent at Constantinople—Another, and no less remarkable cure in the case of Sister Marguerite Bouyssié at the Mother-House of the Sisters of Charity in Paris—Punishment which the justice of God causes to fall on the persecutors of Father Perboyre—Translation of his precious remains to the Mother-House of the Congregation of the Mission in Paris—Hopes entertained of his approaching beatification.

ALREADY during his lifetime and before suffering for the cause of Christ, Father Perboyre had inspired all those with whom he came in contact with a real veneration. Father Rizzolati, the Capuchin missionary who had been at Tcha-Yuen-Keou when the persecution broke out, and who became later on Vicar Apostolic of Hoo-Quang, was often heard to remark that “even if Father Perboyre had not earned the martyr’s palm, his heroic virtues would have entitled him to a place upon our altars.”

But after he had so courageously confessed his faith, and when his combats had been crowned by a death so precious in the eyes of the Lord, this veneration was changed into a kind of worship, God himself seeming to sanction it by a series of extraordinary occurrences, in which, though it is not for us to characterize them, it is nevertheless difficult not to see the signs of a supernatural intervention. We must content ourselves with selecting a few from their number for mention in this place.

First of all comes the apparition of a luminous cross which one of the Chinese missionaries describes as follows: "At the time of Father Perboyre's martyrdom a large luminous cross, very symmetrically shaped, appeared in the heavens. It was perceived by a great number of the faithful in different Christian settlements throughout the country, situated several of them at a great distance one from another. A great many Pagans also bore witness to this phenomenon, and several of them cried out on beholding it, 'That is the sign which the Christians adore. I renounce the worship of idols, I will serve the Lord of Heaven,' and they actually embraced Christianity and were baptized by Mgr. Clauzetto. When Mgr. Clauzetto first heard of those events he was not dis-

posed to attach much importance to them, but later on, impressed by the number and importance of the testimonies received, he made a formal inquiry into the matter, and was enabled in consequence to state that a large, well-formed, luminous cross did appear in the sky; that it was seen at one and the same time, of a like shape and size and in the same spot in the heavens by a great number of witnesses both Christian and Pagan; that these witnesses inhabited districts at a considerable distance one from the other, and that it was impossible that there should have been communication between them. Mgr. Clauzetto further questioned those Christians who had known Father Perboyre personally, and they unanimously declared they had always looked upon him as a great saint."

The servant of God himself appeared after death to several persons the truth of whose testimony is beyond all question. On one occasion he even appeared to a Pagan, by name Lieu-Kioun-Lin, the kind-hearted man who, it will be remembered, had had him carried in a litter, at his own expense, from the market of Quang-In-Tam, to the town of Kou-Tchen-Kieng. Lieu-Kioun-Lin having fallen grievously sick, some years after the death of the servant of God, was thought to be at death's door. His

friends had given up all hope and he himself was a prey to the most distressing thoughts, when Father Perboyre appeared to him, standing at the summit of a ladder of a red color. Beside him was another ladder of white hue, and by this he invited the sick man to ascend to where he was, saying: "You are suffering down there, are you not? Well, come up this white ladder to where I am and you will be happy." The sick man tried to ascend the ladder, but was prevented by the devil under the form of a horrid monster. He then pronounced the holy Name of Jesus, the efficacy of which he had learned from the Christians, and the vision disappeared. Calling to mind all the circumstances of the apparition, as well as the repeated exhortations by which the servant of God had striven to open his eyes to the light, he declared in the presence of his family and to their no small surprise that he wished to become a Christian. He then sent for a catechist, who, finding him sufficiently instructed, administered baptism, and a few days afterward he devoutly rendered up his regenerated soul to God.

We may mention as another no less remarkable occurrence, a cure declared by several doctors to have been miraculous.



There was in the house of the Sisters of Charity at Constantinople, a sister named Antoinette Vincent, who was employed in teaching the children. She was loved by all who knew her, as much for her unalterable sweetness and kindness, as for the devotedness she showed in the discharge of her duties, and there was universal regret when it was known that she had fallen ill.

Her indisposition was already of long standing. A sharp pain made itself felt in her side, leaving her every now and then, but only to return with fresh violence after a short interval. Nine years passed in this manner, until, in the month of December, 1841, the pain became so severe and so continuous that she was never free from it for a moment. Full of courage the Sister kept on her class for three weeks in the midst of the most intense suffering, until at last the disease prevailed and she was forced to take to her bed. Then, only, was the real nature of the malady discovered. An interior abscess, which had been in process of formation for some years past, had at last broken, and the gangrene which from that moment became inevitable placed the sister in imminent danger of death. This was the opinion of the doctors as testified by the Superior. "Sister Antoinette" she wrote, "having been given up by several

doctors, we called in others, who agreed in my presence that the abscess formed on the left side had ulcerated the spleen and had produced so much disorder in the region of the heart that it was impossible she could last many days longer. They refused even to put their names to the consultation, saying that it would only be signing a certificate of death. One of them had the truly Christian courage to warn the sick woman of her danger, and pointing to the crucifix said, 'There is One who, when science is powerless, can alone restore you to health.' "

Sister Antoinette then received the last Sacraments, together with the indulgence for the hour of death, in the most beautiful dispositions, and they were expecting every moment to see her breathe her last.

However, they had not waited for the doctor's verdict before having recourse to supernatural means, and already two novenas had been begun in honor of the venerable John Gabriel Perboyre, one by the Sisters of the Community, and the other by her school children. So much fervor did the children put into their prayers that they even deprived themselves of the little dainties which are so much thought of at that age, to be able to buy candles for the novena.

It was on Friday evening, 21st January, 1842, the fifth day of the Sisters' novena, and the third of the children's, and the patient seemed to be sinking. The death rattle was audible, her face was of a livid hue, and her body exhaled an almost corpse-like odor; in fact, everything seemed to announce that she had only a few hours to live, when suddenly she fell into a sweet and peaceful sleep which lasted three hours. It was midnight when she awoke. Feeling herself relieved she sat up in bed and felt her side; there was no longer any pain. She then tried to take some nourishment; soup, grapes and some quarters of orange were within reach. She tasted them and found them delicious. She felt sure that something extraordinary had happened to her, but fearing to be the dupe of her imagination she scarcely dared to believe in it herself, still less to speak of it to others; she had, besides, so accustomed herself to the thought of death, had accepted it so generously, so joyfully even, that she was half sorry to see her exile prolonged, and preferred to believe herself the victim of an illusion.

Those who were by her side scarcely ventured to believe in her cure either. "We could not help seeing," said the Superior, "that her

breathing was relieved and her features had regained their natural appearance; the marks of gangrene were no longer visible and the unpleasant odor had entirely disappeared. But we dared not trust to these consoling symptoms, knowing how frequently sick people seem to rally when really at the point of death.”

But doubt soon became no longer possible. When morning came she insisted on getting up, dressed herself alone, made her own bed, walked up the three flights of stairs to the Chapel, there thanked our Lord for all He had done for her, then went to visit one of the other Sisters who was sick. The Superior, the Sisters and the children were all in astonishment. The house doctor was no less surprised, but before giving an opinion on such an extraordinary event he wished to examine the patient. Having felt the affected parts he pronounced that actually only part of the spleen was left remaining, but that the wound had healed and that the cure was perfect, a fact which could only be attributed to a miracle. The other consulting physicians, among whom was a Jew, were all of the same opinion, one of them refusing to accept his fee, saying that it would be unjust to take payment for work that Almighty God had done himself.

About the same time another Sister of Charity in Paris was cured in quite as remarkable a manner. Her name was Marguerite Bouyssié, and in 1841 was 21 years of age. Dr. J. Ratheau, who attended the Mother-House, says of her, "Of naturally weak health and of a lymphatic temperament, she had had several illnesses already, one especially serious one at the hospital, where she was going through her postulancy before becoming a Sister of Charity, and on the 2d of April she was seized with a severe attack of pleuro-pneumonia. In spite of soothing medicines and blood-lettings, both general and local, the disease gained ground so much that it became necessary to administer the last Sacraments. However, little by little the symptoms seemed to diminish, she became almost convalescent, and country air was recommended for her, but without effect." At this period, that is to say, early in August, she left the hospital where she had been making her postulancy and went to the novitiate in the Mother-House, where Dr. Ratheau commenced attending her.

"The diagnosis," he says, "was easy to make. We saw we had to do with a pleuro-pneumonia wrongly estimated, owing to congestion of the lungs, and to the presence of

pus, which filled nearly three quarters of the pleural cavity on the left side, and that in a subject with a weak chest, and threatened with the formation of tubercles at the apex of the lungs, if not already developed there.”

However, he recommended all the means prescribed by the medical art; blisters on the side affected, soothing diuretics, and action on the skin by means of baths. But neither the internal nor external remedies could be sustained, and consequently no results followed. Day by day the patient grew weaker. It was at last suggested that she should seek the benefit of country air at a place situated some miles from Paris, and consent was given. She started on the 10th August, but her state only grew more critical and the sickness increased.

She was brought back to Paris four days later, as she wished to die in her convent. The symptoms continued until the 22d of August, when she expressed a desire to make a novena in order to obtain on her behalf the intercession of the new confessor of the faith martyred in China (Father John Gabriel Perboyre).

Up to the 25th the pains went on increasing, and even on the morning of that day they reached a very high degree of intensity. She endeavored to get up to have her bed made,

but could only remain up for a few minutes, suffocation appearing imminent.

Immediately upon lying down she fell asleep, and at the same moment the skin became covered with a cold perspiration. Suddenly, coming out of that state, she said: "I am cured. Give me something to eat, I am very hungry." It was then a quarter to twelve. The sisters thought she was delirious, but seeing her really improved, they brought her some soup, a cutlet, and a large piece of bread, and as that was not enough to satisfy her hunger they added three baked potatoes, all of which agreed with her perfectly. Immediately afterwards she rose, and having completely recovered her strength, was present at recreation with her companions, took supper with them, and had an excellent sleep afterwards. During the whole of the following day, she was at work putting the linen out to dry, and all through the night she sat up with the sick.

Wishing to make certain of the reality of this cure, Dr. Ratheau examined Sister Bouyssié more minutely a few days after, and again on the 4th October following, and was able to pronounce that all the organs which had been so gravely affected were now in perfect order, so that there remained no trace whatever of mor-

bid affection. On the 5th October, 1841, he wrote as follows: "I ask any honest and conscientious doctor if this be a natural termination to an illness of this description? Of course, people have been cured of it, but we know what care and trouble is required, and how frequently the interminable convalescence ends only in death, as many a doctor has learned from his own sad experience. The length of the convalescence in this species of illness is also well known, but where was the convalescence here? There was nothing to be seen but the sudden transition from a serious state of illness to the most perfect health."

From these facts we are bound to draw the following conclusion: "This cure must be considered as the effect of a supernatural cause, or, to speak more clearly, as the effect of a miracle."

To these conversions and extraordinary cures, by means of which Divine Mercy was pleased to show forth the power of its servant, we might add the chastisement which the justice of God inflicted on his unjust persecutors, thus avenging his innocence even in this world. The mandarin of Kou-Tchen-Kieng, who had arrested him, was deprived of his post a short time afterwards, and hanged himself in despair. The Viceroy of Wu-Chan-Foo, a downright wild



beast, who had vainly employed against this meek and patient martyr every means suggested by his barbarous and ferocious rage, was condemned to exile by the Emperor for his cruelty, and the people, thinking the punishment too slight, would willingly have torn him to pieces. It was thus that Herod endured a shameful and miserable death, devoured by worms, and that Pilate, banished into Gaul, ended, it is said, by killing himself.

Are we not right in saying that God Himself seemed by these miracles both of mercy and justice to sanction the species of worship paid after his death to the venerable servant of God, John Gabriel Perboyre? It is hardly to be wondered at if the Mother-House of the religious congregation to which he belonged, and whose glory it is to number him among her sons, should have wished to obtain possession of his precious remains. In 1858 they were exhumed by Mgr. Spelta, Vicar-Apostolic of Hu-Peh, identified by Mgr. Delaplace, Vicar-Apostolic of Tche-Kiang, and removed from the inhospitable soil of China to his dear native country. Father Etienne, then Superior of the two-fold family of St. Vincent of Paul, announces the translation of his relics as follows, in a circular dated Paris, 1st January, 1861:

“At the very commencement of this year, 1860, on the 6th of January, God in his goodness was pleased to realize our most cherished wish, and most sweet hopes. On that day, the anniversary of the birth of our venerable martyr, Gabriel Perboyre, we had the happiness of receiving into our Mother-House his precious body, brought back from China by one of our brethren, Mgr. Danicourt, Vicar-Apostolic of Kiang-Si. It would be difficult to describe the emotion that filled all hearts on becoming possessed of so rich a treasure. Kneeling around the coffin from which sanctity seemed to radiate, we love to pour out our homage before it, while from the heavens above our brother smiled down in answer to our loving welcome. What a joy for us to receive again in our midst, crowned with the double aureole of apostle and martyr, him, whom we had seen go forth from this same Mother-House twenty-five years before, to distant lands beyond the sea, bearing the good tidings of salvation, and ready to undergo a life of toil, privation and suffering for the name of Christ, and to seal with his blood his faith and his love for souls! When formerly director of the Seminary he had, by his teaching and example, shown the youthful generation what a true missionary ought to be.

Now he had come back amongst us to show them how to suffer, and to die for the glory of God and the salvation of the brethren.

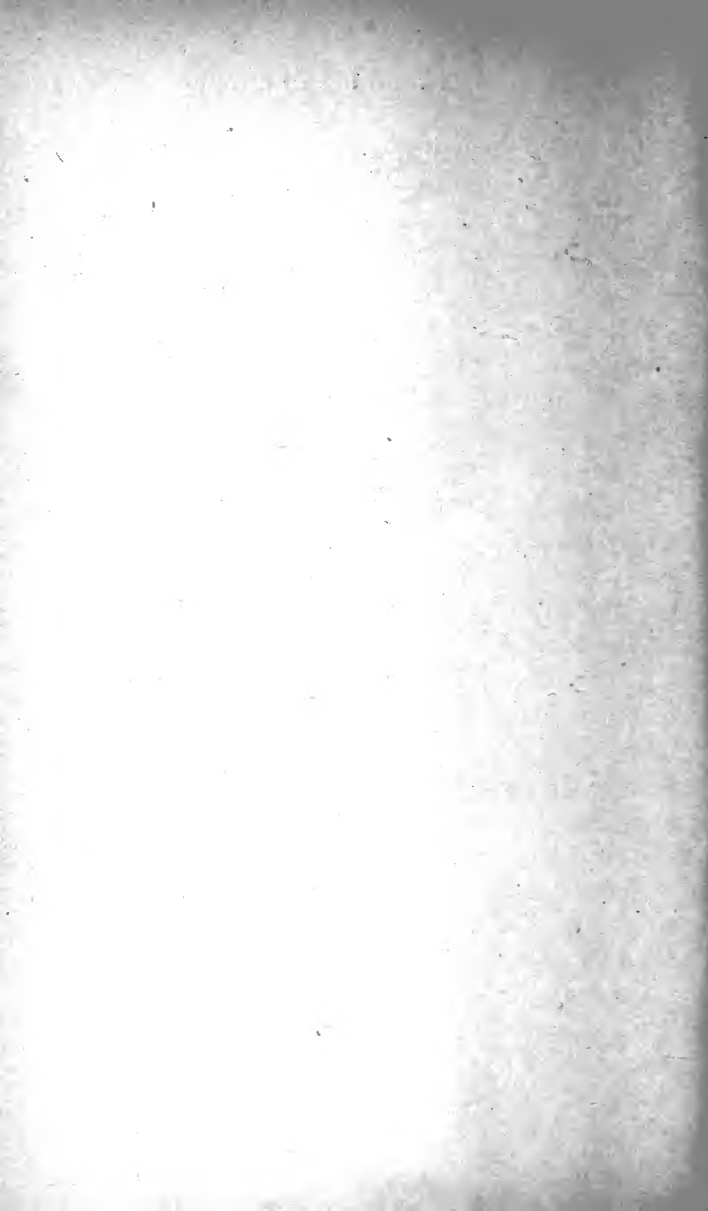
“The 25th January, a day ever memorable for the foundation of the Society, was fixed by Mgr. Morlot for the canonical identification of the body of our venerable martyr, according to the instructions *ad hoc* sent from Rome. He was kind enough to preside himself at the touching ceremony. . . . When the identity of the body had been canonically recognized, it was carried into our chapel and placed in a vault prepared for its reception. There it will remain until by the goodness of God we are permitted to place it upon our altars, and allow it to share the glory and honors paid to the body of St. Vincent.”

This hope thus entertained by the Superior-General seems now on the eve of being realized. Already, before the death of the venerable servant of God, Pope Gregory XVI, on hearing of his captivity, and the sufferings he was enduring, advised that all the facts likely to serve one day in the process of his beatification should be collected, and expressed his intention, if the martyrdom was consummated, to favor with as little delay as possible the introduction of his cause. The sovereign Pontiff

was not unmindful of his promise, and two years after the death of the servant of God, in 1843, the first testimonies having been got together, he signed the decree introducing the cause of beatification. This was the last official act of the holy See, and from that moment Father Perboyre was entitled to be styled *Venerable*.

Since then, many causes, such as the long distances, the condition of witnesses whose depositions it was necessary to take, the loss of certain important documents, which though afterwards discovered, were mislaid for a time and had to be replaced, added to the innumerable formalities which surround these proceedings, and the wise delay which the Roman court observes in such cases, have conspired to retard the accomplishment of a wish so dear to the hearts of all the children of St. Vincent. A recent work in which Father Ferdinand Morani, the advocate of the cause, has ably resumed both the canonical researches undertaken respecting the martyrdom and the various miracles worked by the intercession of the servant of God, is about to be presented to the sacred Congregation of Rites. The proofs therein adduced by the learned advocate, revised by his Eminence the Vice-promotor of the faith, and

already published, are in themselves so solid and convincing that but little doubt is felt in Rome as to the success of the cause. May God realize our hopes, and may He see fit to strengthen and sustain our steps in the ways of virtue by giving us a new model to imitate, and another saint to invoke!



## APPENDIX.

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Half a century was within a few months of completion, from the day on which our glorious martyr met his triumphant death, when the Vicar of Christ declared him worthy of a title he had so well merited, the title of BLESSED.

On November 7, 1889, Pope Leo XIII, with all the impressive solemnity proper on so great an occasion, announced to the world that John Gabriel Perboyre's life and sufferings and death had been subjected to that long and rigid scrutiny demanded for beatification, and that the result was more than a triumph for the humble missionary, who, after awful and long continued sufferings, had given his life in proof of his love, and handed back, to the God who made it for Himself, his gentle but heroic soul.

In the annals of beatification we doubt if there is anything as striking as the contrast drawn by the head of the Church between the sufferings and death of our beloved Martyr and those of our blessed Saviour Himself. The pontifical Brief of Beatification is a document of over twenty-three hundred words, and is an admira-

ble résumé of the Martyr's career from his birth to his death.

We have room only for the following extracts:

“Great is the fame which the sons of St. Vincent have acquired for themselves by their missionary labors in Christian lands; but especially have they distinguished themselves by their holy industry in propagating the faith of Christ among the heathen peoples of China, insomuch that the fruit of their labor and the memory of their efforts will never die. For true it is, that in the performance of duties so arduous this Community has given proofs not a few, of what zeal for religion, what charity for the neighbor, can accomplish. On this account God has deigned to choose from their flock victims worthy to be offered him, who should add to the merit of a host of virtues the triumphal palm of martyrdom. This grace was merited by John Gabriel Perboyre, who, after laboring with wonderful zeal for nearly five years among the Chinese, being overtaken by civil persecution, joyfully for Christ's sake poured forth his life with his blood.”

(Then follows a sketch of his life and labors up to the time of his arrest.)

“At length the time drew near when the holy



priest was to prove the reality and height of his virtue by a glorious martyrdom. Suddenly, throughout the region in which he was stationed, arose a storm of persecution against the professors of the Christian faith, and particularly against the zealous shepherds of the flock. To John Gabriel the divine Goodness granted a singular favor, which went far to assuage the bitterness of the persecution to which he was subjected. In the cruel torments which he underwent may be traced a remarkable likeness to the sufferings of our Holy Redeemer. Having concealed himself in a forest from a band of pursuing soldiers, he was betrayed by one of his neophytes for thirty pieces of silver. On the approach of the armed satellites, another of his disciples, like Peter, wished to repel them by force; but the saint, following the example of his divine Master, ordered him to lay down his arms, and gave himself up to the enemy. The infuriate soldiers seized him, as the Jews did Jesus, struck him, wounded him with their swords, bound him in chains and dragged him, half naked, to the city. Being led to the tribunal, he was placed on his knees before the judge, with his hands tied behind his back, and questioned concerning his country and religion. As soon as he professed himself a Christian, he was over-

whelmed by the multitude with opprobrium and contumely. The inhuman judge ordered him to be more closely bound, and delivered him to the custody, or rather to the torture, of a certain man, who, on account of his ferocity, was called 'The Tiger.'

"On the following day he was compelled to travel on foot to another city, some distance off. One of the soldiers, seeing the holy man weak with hunger, covered with wounds and bereft of all his strength, offered himself, after the example of the Cyrenean, to support his tottering steps. To this man John Gabriel, after his Martyrdom, appeared in a vision, and urged him to adopt the Christian faith, promising him on the part of God a heavenly reward.

"Being brought before the military prefect, after declaring himself a Christian, he, like Jesus, answered no other questions. On this account he was again cruelly scourged and cast into a frightful dungeon. To these bodily torments was added an anguish of mind, so keen that it almost deprived him of life. Being ordered to trample upon the image of Jesus crucified, he, with deep reverence and tears of love, embraced this sacred emblem, whereupon the brutal executioners, by whom he was surrounded, snatched from him the crucifix and the

image of the Virgin, and profaned them most atrociously before his very eyes. But what afflicted him most keenly was to see some of his disciples, impelled by the promises and threats of the judges, abjure the religion of Christ which he had labored so zealously to impart to them. However, nothing could shake his constancy. Mocked and scourged, exposed to the brutality of his enemies, loaded with cruel chains that cut into his flesh, whipped and scourged until not only his blood flowed like water, but even particles of his flesh were torn from his body, branded with hot irons, like an infamous criminal, he bore all with indomitable fortitude and unruffled sweetness of temper.

“At length, after a whole year of such exquisite torments, being condemned to death, with five criminals of the lowest order, he walked to the place of execution with a cheerful step and joyous countenance, as to a veritable triumph. Suspended by the neck upon a cross, he was raised above the earth, and consummated the sacrifice of himself by a glorious martyrdom on the 11th of September, 1840, expiring on the same day of the week and almost at the very hour that Jesus gave up the ghost. So much did his death, in all its circumstances, resemble the

death of his divine Master, that no one can doubt he is numbered among those elect souls, whom God 'foreknew and predestined to be made comfortable to the image of his SON.' "

When we read, in the foregoing life of our blessed Martyr, that his sufferings and death resemble those of Jesus Christ, we may feel like making some allowance for the author's enthusiasm—perhaps the comparison strikes us even as irreverent. But when the Vicar of our Saviour, after examining the testimony which the Congregation of Rites had unanimously declared more than sufficient for beatification, takes the pains thus to trace the same similarity, the thoughtful reader must be filled with admiration and feel moved to thank God that, in an age of religious indifference, so wondrous a specimen of Christian heroism is possible.

The year 1890 was a memorable one for the children of St. Vincent in all parts of the world by reason of the Triduums and religious festivities with which they endeavored to honor their martyred brother, and to invoke his intercession. From their Mother House in Paris, where repose the treasured remains of our blessed hero, the key note of triumphal song was sounded, and its symphonies were taken up by harmonious voices in a thousand lands, and

fervent hearts beat warm with exultation as the joyful cadence of hymn and prayer went round and round the earth. “*In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum.*” Cardinals, archbishops and bishops lent their presence, their eloquence and their learning to celebrate the glory and rehearse the deeds of the century’s most glorious Christian martyr. Wherever was known the white cornet of a Sister of Charity or the presence of a Lazarist missionary, there was held a special celebration and there was invoked with fervent piety the martyr’s blessed name.

And the wave of devotion that then swept so many hearts has not died away, but is widening in influence and gaining in volume as time goes on. Nor has the object of this devotion shown himself indifferent to the petitions that have been addressed to him.

We give below some extracts from letters that have come to us in answer to inquiries as to favors received by those who asked them through our blessed martyr’s intercession.

At the request of the writers the names, in most cases, are not given; but these can be produced when asked for by the proper authorities, and the statements here made verified by suitable evidence.

These simple stories are here given to the

reader for what they really are, the earnest, honest expressions of hearts with whom the doctrine of the Communion of Saints is a living reality and not a vague theory—who know and feel that the saints of God can hear our prayers and do often obtain what we desire; and if they needed evidence to verify this faith that is in them they have it in abundance, for themselves, at least, in the facts they here adduce. They have formed the acquaintance of this new advocate in the heavenly court, and knowing how dearly he loved God, and how magnificent the proof he gave of that love, they have gone, nothing doubting, to ask the favor of his influence before the throne of the God he lived and died for. And the sequel shows they have not been disappointed.

Not a single instance here recorded but can be substantiated, not merely by one or two witnesses, but by many; by parties unconcerned and by those whose hearts burn with gratitude too deep and strong for words, towards our holy Martyr, whose beneficiaries they believe they are, and believe it with a conviction that no power on earth can shake.

From an orphan asylum in the state of Michigan comes the following report:

“About two years ago we received a child

into our Asylum who was afflicted with an incurable itch; before we discovered it, the contagion spread among the children. All our care and the doctor's remedies failed to check it.

“The sister in charge of the children, much distressed, put away all remedies, hung up a picture of Blessed John Gabriel and made a novena to obtain a cessation of the trouble through his intercession; at the novena's close, the annoying disease entirely disappeared and we have never had a trace of it since.”

One of the blessed Martyr's beneficiaries in Pennsylvania writes as follows: “Some time ago our beloved and much lamented Father Mandine gave me a relic of our Blessed Martyr; the first case where its power was evident was in that of a very painful toothache. The relic was applied, sleep came to the sufferer, the toothache was cured and no pain was felt in the tooth for a year after.

“The second was the case of a young man very low with typhoid fever, of whose recovery the doctors had very little hope. I gave the patient my relic and a novena was begun. The change was evident at once. The quick recovery of the young man surprised every one, especially the physician.”

Here is a report that comes from St. Louis:

“It affords me great pleasure to relate to you briefly a wonderful conversion wrought through the intercession of Blessed John Gabriel. A gentleman of this city had not been to the sacraments for forty years. He took very ill and was sick for two months. His wife and children were Catholics and brought the priest to see him. He would not so much as look at the priest and gave the latter to understand that his return was not desirable.

“The poor wife was heartbroken. She sent a note to me to ask prayers for him, and I sent her a relic of Blessed John Gabriel, and told her to make a novena in which our little community would join.

“On the fourth day the sick man became so much alarmed about his condition that he asked his wife to send for a priest so he could make his confession, which he did with the greatest marks of a true penitent.

He received the last sacraments before the end of the novena and died most happily, to the great edification of his numerous friends.”

The Superior of a Maternity Hospital in Pennsylvania writes as follows:

“We recognize the intercession of our Blessed Martyr as a very powerful help in our maternity cases. Though I can not cite special



instances, with any details, we never have a case where danger threatens without having recourse to Blessed Perboyre, using his relic, medal and prayers, and ever have cause to congratulate ourselves for so doing.

“Two instances I can speak of that show his favorable interest in us.

“A little boy about two and a half years old was hopelessly afflicted with something like gangrene sore mouth. I gathered the children around his bed, placed the relic and medal of the Blessed Martyr in the hands of two of them, and with the band of Innocents invoked his aid. A surprising change took place at once and in a few days the child was well.

“A young man, dissipated and miserable, the besotted victim of all kinds of degrading habits, called at our house. He wanted to reform and asked advice and prayers. I gave him a medal and a short account of the Martyr's life and sufferings. Some months later I received a letter thanking me for what I had done. He had gone to his duties, and gave every hope of a thorough reform.”

And here is a contribution from the State of Virginia:

“We have two examples of the power of Blessed Perboyre with God; one of a young

man 18 years of age, the other of a young girl about the same age.

“The former while studying for the priesthood at St. Charles College, was suddenly stricken with paralysis. He lost the entire use of his lower limbs; his hands were weak and not of much service to him. The physician decided that a cure was impossible. Strangely enough the boy never lost hope, but felt that he must get well and go back to college. He was given a picture of Blessed Perboyre and his life. At once he evinced great confidence in the Martyr’s intercession, and with others, began a novena. The use of his feet began to return, he continued to improve constantly and now walks alone to church, half a mile distant. His astonished physician, a Protestant, confesses freely that the cure was effected by a power higher than any exercised by his profession.

“The other case is that of a young girl, whose lower brain became diseased, so that she lost all power of action. She lay lifeless for a month, would not take food unless it was forced into her mouth. One could not imagine a more pitiable case. A medal of Blessed Perboyre was placed around her neck, her mother prayed fervently to the martyr, and in three days a change took place. She took food,

began to show interest in things around her, and in two weeks was perfectly cured. She has a marked devotion to her blessed benefactor, and feels that he has cured her.”

The Carney Hospital of Boston, in charge of the Sisters of Charity, is well known not only in New England, but throughout the United States. We are pleased to be allowed to use its name in connection with the following:

“It affords us great pleasure if any little word of ours could add to the glory of our Blessed Brother, John Gabriel Perboyre. On opening a new wing of our hospital in April, 1891, we named one of the halls after him; at that time there were five non-Catholic patients, who, we feared, would die without baptism; they gave no reason for us to hope for their conversion. We placed them under our Blessed Brother’s care, entreating him to secure heaven for them. Each day special prayers in his honor were recited before his picture, which hangs in this hall; before the month closed these five had the happiness of being received into the fold, at their earnest request. In the spring of 1892 we had two cases that baffled the skill of the physicians, who declared that no human aid could save them. In each

case we were told by the doctor, ‘This patient will not be alive when I make my visit to-morrow.’ Blessed Perboyre’s intercession was invoked, and to the surprise of the doctors their patients were better, and at present are enjoying good health. So great was the impression made upon them that they remarked: ‘The Sisters have prayers that can do more good than medical science.’ Anxious to show our gratitude to our blessed benefactor, we send you an order for 100 copies of the book you are preparing.”

The following remarkable conversion took place in one of the best known Catholic boarding schools for young ladies in the Eastern States:

“We were celebrating November 7, 1893, the feast of Blessed John Gabriel Perboyre, whom many of the pupils had chosen as the patron of their studies. The High Mass was sung by a Son of St. Vincent at the beautiful marble altar dedicated to our glorious Martyr.

“In order to excite the pupils of the school to greater devotion, the Directress had, on the previous evening, spoken to them of the sufferings of this faithful servant of God. Among our Protestant pupils was a young girl of rare intelligence, in her eighteenth year. This dear

child, whose mother was a former pupil, had long occasioned us much anxiety. She had been in the academy nearly four years, and still despising the proffered grace, she not only seemed to find pleasure in manifesting her indifference, but openly declared that her eternal interest gave her not the slightest concern. On the night previous to the feast she appeared to witness the martyrdom of Blessed John Gabriel and to hear him tell her that both her father and herself would owe their salvation to his intercession. Contrary to her custom, her first act on awaking was a prayer in which she entreated the Blessed Martyr to be mindful of his promise. Notwithstanding this, the favored one tells us that, struggling against an unaccountably increased aversion for anything relating to her soul, she had, with a feeling almost of desperation, resigned herself to attend the solemn service on that memorable morning. During the High Mass, as the priest recited the Credo, while all knelt at the words '*Et Homo Factus Est*,' strangely impressed and subdued, this stray sheep felt her whole frame thrill with reverence as her lips involuntarily repeated: 'Credo! I believe. Yes, my God, I firmly believe.' A prayer book lay near; opening it at random, her eyes fell upon

the 'Profession of Faith,' which she devoutly read. At that moment she became conscious that grace had triumphed in her soul and that she owed the favor to Blessed Perboyre, henceforth to be her beloved Patron.

"After Mass she left the chapel with her companions, but had scarcely crossed the threshold when an irresistible desire impelled her to retrace her steps and make known to the Reverend Chaplain the wonderful change so suddenly wrought in her. Seeing the ardor of her disposition, the zealous missionary directed the new convert to begin her preparations, but in spite of her eagerness and evident sincerity, he deemed it prudent to require of her a long probation. Submitting humbly to this decision, N., with a courage hitherto unknown to her, now respectfully informed her father of her intention to enter the true church. Instead of the bitter opposition which all dreaded, this gentleman immediately undertook a long journey to assure himself that his idolized child was not prompted by caprice or any human influence. He arrived at the school on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, and laid before N. all the sacrifices involved in the step she was about to take; then, filled with admiration at her firmness, he gave his full and free consent. Before

taking his departure, however, the fond father begged one favor of the daughter so dear to his heart, viz., that she would promise never to become a religious, as the very thought of this would crush him. 'I can not make this promise, my dear father,' was the answer, 'for although there is little reason now to think such a favor is in store for me, my new-found faith teaches me that my future is in the hands of God.' How visibly our glorious martyr had smoothed away all difficulties!

"January 6, the Epiphany, being also the birthday of Blessed John Gabriel, was chosen as the day of his protege's first communion. On the eve of this double feast, after her abjuration, N. took in baptism, with her own name, that of Perboyre.

"She still perseveres in most edifying fervor, perfectly convinced that she is indebted to our dear martyr for her happiness. She cherishes the hope that, through his intercession, her father may, ere long, share her blessed privilege."

The following striking instance of our Blessed Martyr's power in behalf of the afflicted occurred in the city of Baltimore.

"A prominent citizen of Baltimore, returning from his office one evening, complained of

acute pain in the head, saying also to his wife that his memory was failing. He continued, however, to attend to his business, until the third day, when his symptoms became most alarming. Not only he could no longer speak intelligently, but he was even unable to express, either by words or in writing, what he wished to say.

“The physician was sent for, and being a warm friend of the family, he at once informed Mrs. N. that the case was of a very serious nature. A tumor or abscess had formed on the brain, and not showing itself on the exterior of the skull, the case was evidently beyond the doctor’s control; he added: ‘No one on earth can tell how this may terminate.’ In his anxiety the attending physician insisted that a consultation should be held. The eminent physicians who had been called in, likewise declared the case beyond human skill; that even if they could scatter the gathering, blood poison would, most likely, be the result.

“Some of our sisters called to see Mr. N. on the fourth day of his illness, and to them the case seemed hopeless. Conscious to some extent of the sad state which so grieved his devoted family, Mr. N. prepared himself as best he could for confession and communion. After a few days the sisters called again, and



were much pained to learn from his heart-broken wife that there was no improvement in the sick man's condition. One of them took from around her neck a medal of Blessed Perboyre and handing it to Mrs. N., she said: 'Put this medal on Mr. N. and while he wears it let us all pray for your husband's recovery. We have great confidence in the intercession of this great servant of God who suffered martyrdom in the present century.' Then Sister smiling added: 'His reputation is at stake, so we need have no doubt that he will prove to us how great is his power with Jesus Christ, whose sacred passion his death so closely resembled!'

"Our faith was not disappointed. From the moment he put on the medal the patient recovered rapidly and in two weeks from that day he and his wife received holy communion together in thanksgiving for this favor.

"We were delighted to see our good friends in church again, and with them over and over we thanked our glorious martyr for this consoling proof of his miraculous power. Mr. N. is very grateful to the 'Sisters' Saint,' as he called Blessed John Gabriel Perboyre during his illness. As to his dear medal Mr. N. refuses to restore it to the owner, having resolved never to part with this treasure."

Here is an extract from a letter from the principal of one of the largest parochial schools in the West:

“ We have applied to our Blessed Martyr in behalf of certain young persons, between the age of 13 and 20, who seemed bent on their own ruin—intractable, irreligious, etc. We have seen seventy or more of these thoroughly reclaimed, prepared for First Communion, and, it is to be hoped, secured to God through the intercession and protection of Blessed Perboyre.

“ Many of our sisters have experienced the happy effects of his protection in their own private trials in the arduous work of the school room.

“ One of our sisters obtained through a novena made to Blessed Perboyre the conversion of her father, who for twenty-three years had neglected his religious duties. He continues practical and exemplary. Another obtained a special spiritual blessing, which she attributes wholly to the intercession of our Blessed Martyr.”

The Providence Hospital, in the city of Washington, conducted by the Sisters of Charity, is well and favorably known by many of the first men of our nation and by visitors to the national capital.

Here is an extract from a letter written at this hospital:

“ We are happy to state that several wonderful cures have occurred in our hospital, which we feel we owe entirely to our Blessed Martyr.

“ We will select the two following: A young lady entered the hospital on October 26, 1892, and left February 8, 1893. This patient fell and injured the tibia, which caused periostitis. Three operations were performed, the last of which was very critical. A hole had to be bored one inch into the tibia. Her sufferings were intense, the strongest opiates being of no avail. The doctor felt that nothing short of amputation would cure the lady. The Sister in charge of the patient had much faith in and devotion to our Blessed Martyr, and applied his relic to the limb, begging the lady to join her in asking a cure, to which she readily consented.

“ Shortly after she began to feel relieved, her sufferings gradually disappeared, leaving her able to walk as well and as fast as anybody. All is attributed to Blessed Perboyre.

“ The other is a case of laparotomy. This patient entered the hospital May 20, 1892, in a very bad condition. The doctors told her that her only chance for life was an operation;

for the sake of her family she consented, though with very little hope of recovering. The first step after the operation was periostitis, giving the doctors every reason to fear that septicæmia would next develop. The Sister applied the blessed relic and in one hour's time a most wonderful change took place; she not only quickly received relief, but in a few weeks the lady left the hospital perfectly cured, through the intercession of Blessed Perboyre."

The following case is from a religious institution in New Orleans:

"We had a patient suffering from heart trouble and dropsy. Her physical condition brought on depression of spirits and despondency of a serious form. The doctor pronounced her case hopeless, and said that she could be relieved only by death. Her confessor advised her to pray to Blessed John Gabriel Perboyre, which she did, and was cured."

The following remarkable cures occurred in one of the largest and best known private hospitals in the Mississippi Valley:

"A young woman suffering from a diseased stomach, was so badly off that she could take nothing but liquid food, and even this caused intense suffering. After treating her for some weeks without any improvement, the doctors

decided that she was incurable. It was then suggested that she should make a novena in honor of Blessed John Gabriel Perboyre, wearing his picture at the same time, as we had no relic. She gladly consented, and was joined in the pious exercise by the ward patients. At the end of the novena she was able to take any kind of food, suffered no pain, and in a word, was cured. She returned to her trade, that of dress-making, and two years later, when last seen by us, was in excellent health.

“A poor woman, the mother of a large family, was brought to the hospital in a suffering and very dangerous condition. The doctors used every effort to relieve her, but without success, and as the case was desperate they decided to perform an operation, which would be her only chance for life, but which might also prove fatal. They gave her a few hours to rest, and in the meantime a picture of Blessed Perboyre was placed on her and prayers commenced. After a short time the woman was relieved and there was no necessity for the operation. She returned to her home, fully recovered, in a few days.”

The Sisters of Charity from St. Simeon's school, New Orleans, write as follows:

“We have made novenas to Blessed Per-

boyre, and through his potent intercession have received many favors, temporal and spiritual, for ourselves and others. Prominent among them are the following, which the recipients wish made known, that devotion to this great servant of God be increased.

“ A lady of New Orleans, very much afflicted, came to one of our Sisters for advice and consolation. Her husband had become addicted to the use of liquor, and was almost constantly intoxicated. In her grief the poor woman scarcely knew what to do. Sister advised her to procure a picture of Blessed Perboyre, to burn a light before it while making a novena. Mrs. ——— promised that if her prayer was granted, she would always keep a picture of Blessed Perboyre in her house, with a light burning day and night before it. The novena was made, the husband received Holy Communion on the ninth day, and now leads a sober life. The lamp burns constantly before our Blessed Martyr, and each night this couple kneel and recite a prayer in his honor. They wish to do all they can to promote his veneration.

“ A young lady, also of this city, suffered frequently from abscesses in her throat. She made a novena to Blessed Perboyre, during the

course of which the Sisters applied his relic several times to her throat. The abscesses disappeared, and have never troubled her since.

“A beautiful little girl of four years, child of one of the citizens of New Orleans, fell, injuring her hip so severely that there seemed to be no hope of recovery. Her parents endeavored to resign themselves to the fact that she would always be a cripple. A Sister of Charity, who had great devotion to Blessed Perboyre, gave the mother of the child some oil which had been burning in front of his image. Though a month had elapsed, the hip was bruised and the child suffered much pain; her mother used the oil for a few days and all marks disappeared, and the severe pain was alleviated. Still the child could not walk, for the limb had shrunk very much, and she had to remain in bed with weights attached to her foot. Six months after the accident, during the triduum held at St. Stephen's church, in honor of the beatification of John Gabriel Perboyre, the little one said: ‘Papa, if you take me to church, I'll walk.’ Her father carried her to the church, and after the devotions were over, home again. On reaching the house she wished to be put down, and when this was done she began instantly to walk, and so rapidly that her father, frightened, ran to

catch her, fearing she would again fall. But she was entirely cured, and has remained well ever since. The child seems to have received spiritual favors also with this material one, for she is very pious. Her parents, devout Catholics, are very grateful, and feel that they owe this great favor entirely to our dear Martyr's intercession.

“One of the Sisters, who was very ill, and of whom no one entertained any hope, was cured by applying the relic of Blessed Perboyre. Innumerable spiritual favors, which we are not at liberty to mention, have also been obtained.”

In one of our large Southern hospitals, a Sister relates a striking account of the miraculous conversion of a most hardened sinner, obtained through the intercession of our Blessed Martyr. She says:

“A poor man was brought to us, so sick that we thought it necessary to question him concerning his religion. He seemed to have come fully prepared to resist any suggestions on this subject and answered very sharply: ‘I am not a Catholic now, but a Freemason. I was at one time foolish enough to believe in such things, but have since learned better.’ Feeling that reasoning would be useless and that only



the most powerful grace of God could reclaim so hardened a soul, I placed him in the special keeping of our Blessed Mother, slipping our dear miraculous medal under his pillow; this he by some means discovered and threw the medal across the floor. The following day one of our good Fathers visited him. He acted very rudely, telling the priest to go away. Father returned, a second time, a third and fourth time, and finally concluded it was useless to worry him. Feeling that my unworthiness might be the cause why our Blessed Mother seemed not to rescue this poor creature from the worst of all deaths, I asked one of our dear ancient Sisters, who had always been most successful in winning over such desperate cases, to say a few words to him, but she met with just the same treatment.

“Almost discouraged by so much obstinacy, the thought occurred to me to recommend the case to the intercession of Blessed Perboyre. Acting on the impulse of the moment, whilst arranging his pillow, I slipped a picture and medal of this great and zealous confessor under it, and left him for the night. On the following morning, whilst kneeling before the statue of our Blessed Martyr, during the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, I begged him most fervently to display

now, by his powerful intercession in behalf of this poor unfortunate man, the great zeal and charity which so pressed him whilst on earth. I had scarcely commenced to distribute the breakfast, when the man sent for me to come quickly, and as I did so, he said ‘Oh, Sister, send me a priest; any one will do, only send him.’ I told him I was almost afraid to do so, he had sent the priest away so often, and I asked him if he were in earnest? He burst into tears, sobbing bitterly, until the arrival of the priest, who heard his confession, anointed and gave him the last blessing. On seeing me, after all was done, he said, ‘Oh, Sister! I have just done what I vowed I never would do, make my confession. How good God has been to me?’ I then showed him the picture and medal of Blessed John Gabriel from under his head. He kissed them reverently and continued to weep and utter fervent ejaculations until consciousness forsook him a few hours later.”

A Sister also relates an incident which occurred at N. during the triduum there in honor of Blessed John Gabriel. It is of a little orphan boy from an asylum, who after vainly imploring all who he thought might procure for him the happiness of Catholic baptism, entered the church where the triduum was going on,

approached as closely as possible to the altar of exposition and from the very fulness of his little heart (he was only 8 years old) said: "Oh, Blessed Perboyre, get me baptized." Before the triduum was ended, contrary to all expectations, all obstacles were overcome; and more yet, for the one who most opposed it not only urged it, but promised that at any sacrifice she would always procure this happy child the means of attending his religious duties. The child was baptized and took the name of his powerful intercessor.

The same Sister tells of a little girl (whose parents were non-Catholic) paralyzed in the spine, so as to be a perfect cripple. She had to be handled and carried as an infant. Wealth had spared nothing to effect a restoration, but all to no effect, as with age she became more helpless. The case being so sad we made a novena for her, and she visited the chapel (was carried there) during the triduum in honor of our Blessed Martyr. She went home with her parents a sound child, overjoyed at the possession of what she scarcely ever knew before. She craved the privilege of being baptized, but we thought it more prudent she should not be, owing to some special reasons, and feeling assured that he who had so powerfully aided in

obtaining her bodily health would, in time, also obtain the life of her soul.

The following incident lacks nothing in the way of reliable and weighty evidence, since it is attested both by the faculty and students of famous Niagara University.

“ Denis Keyes, after several years of faithful service as a lay brother of the Congregation of the Mission, was attacked by consumption while stationed at the College and Seminary of Our Lady of Angels (Niagara University), N. Y. The ravages of the disease, besides rendering him unfit for active duty, so increased a mental weakness to which he had long been subject, that he evinced unmistakable signs of insanity. His mental malady now took the peculiar form of aversion for all things spiritual. Any mention of Mass, confession, prayers, was sure to provoke the poor brother to utter blasphemies, so that it was considered better to leave him alone in his delusion. In the spring of 1890, he was compelled to take to his bed. Even then, whenever approached concerning his dying condition and the necessity of receiving the sacraments, he continued his irreligious comments, speaking disrespectfully of God, the Blessed Virgin and the sacraments. About this time the inmates of Niagara were celebrat-

ing a solemn triduum in honor of the beatification of Venerable John Gabriel Perboyre. Father Hayden, director of the Seminarians, recommended to them the spiritual needs of the sick brother, requesting them to make a novena in honor of Blessed John Gabriel that the sick man might obtain the grace, and receive the last sacraments, in a sound state of mind.

“On the day that the novena ended the Reverend Director was most agreeably surprised, upon entering the brother's room, to hear him make known his wish to go to confession and prepare himself for a happy death. A careful examination revealed no traces of his former mental condition; he was calm, rational in speech and action. Strangest of all, he was most prayerfully inclined, asking for the crucifix and kissing it with every mark of the true religious. The last sacraments were accordingly administered to him. He knew most fully, all that was going on about him; he realized that he was preparing for his dread passage to eternity.

“During the ten days which intervened between his reception of the last sacraments and his happy death, although he suffered intensely at times, no complaint escaped him, only pious ejaculations and acts of resignation to the Di-

vine will. The spirit of his vocation had come back to him once more; the humble brother of Saint Vincent and of Blessed Perboyre was himself again, and so, surrounded by the priests and brothers of the institution, he passed from his brethren here below to join his brethren gathered above around the throne of his Father St. Vincent."

The following letters speak for themselves:

"NEW ORLEANS, La., January, 1894.

"The deep gratitude I feel to Blessed John Gabriel Perboyre, coupled to my ardent desire to assist in propagating a lively devotion to this noble martyr, urges me to publish an account of a favor wrought in my behalf.

"From early childhood I was troubled with an affection of the ears, which at times caused intense and prolonged suffering. In November, 1891, I had a most severe attack; the usual remedies proved ineffectual; nothing gave me relief. My pious mother, witnessing my excruciating pain, exhorted me to address myself to Blessed Perboyre, whose triduum we were then preparing to celebrate. I placed a picture of the martyr on my ear, and besought his aid. In a few moments relief came. I fell into a calm sleep, and have never since ex-

perienced the slightest return of the pain, that had baffled the skill of some of the ablest physicians of the city.

“ I feel I owe this cure to the intercession of that great apostle, who closed his ears to the noise and tumult of the world that he might the better hear the low, sweet voice of the Master calling him to distant China—and to martyrdom.

“ BLANCHE MICHELL.”

“ DONALDSONVILLE, La., March, 1894.

“ Gratitude for a favor received from God through the intercession of His blessed servant John Gabriel Perboyre, and a desire to spread devotion to this holy Martyr, are our motives for the publication of the following: About eighteen months ago our only son, a child of three years, was stricken with paralysis of the limbs. The poor little fellow, hitherto full of life and activity, became utterly incapable of moving or of helping himself in any way. Doctors’ remedies were applied without effect and we were informed that perhaps the limbs might strengthen and the child be able to walk again as he grew older. Still, the fear that he might always remain a cripple far outweighed the hope of his recovery. One day, after he had been suffering for about three months, our

good Sisters of Charity sent us a medal of Blessed Perboyre, telling us that the holy Martyr had lately been beatified, and recommending us to invoke his aid in behalf of our boy. We applied the medal to the poor lifeless limbs, while the innocent baby lips repeated after us little invocations. Several days' repeated prayers were finally heard, and, to our amazement and delight, our little son escaped from the arms which had been holding him so carefully, stood on the floor and cried out: 'O, mamma, mamma, I can walk!' Sure enough, the little limbs, a moment before limp and lifeless, were again capable of sustaining the weight of the little body. From that time they continued to strengthen and now our child is as full of animation and can walk as well as any boy of four. He still wears the medal of Blessed Perboyre, and we, his parents, praise God for the power bestowed on His Blessed Servant.

“MR. AND MRS. FELIX LE BLANC.”

We have passed beyond the space allotted us for this Appendix, yet we close it with regret, for we are obliged to omit a large number of narratives which would make most interesting reading. We have selected only a few ac-



counts, of the many before us, not from the United States only but from various parts of the old world. We are grateful to God for the privilege afforded us of compiling, however awkwardly, this little Appendix. At the feet of our blessed Martyr we lay our pen, and beg him to accept its feeble effort as an expression of earnest love of him, and a sincere desire to imitate, in some small degree, the virtues that made him loved by God and man.

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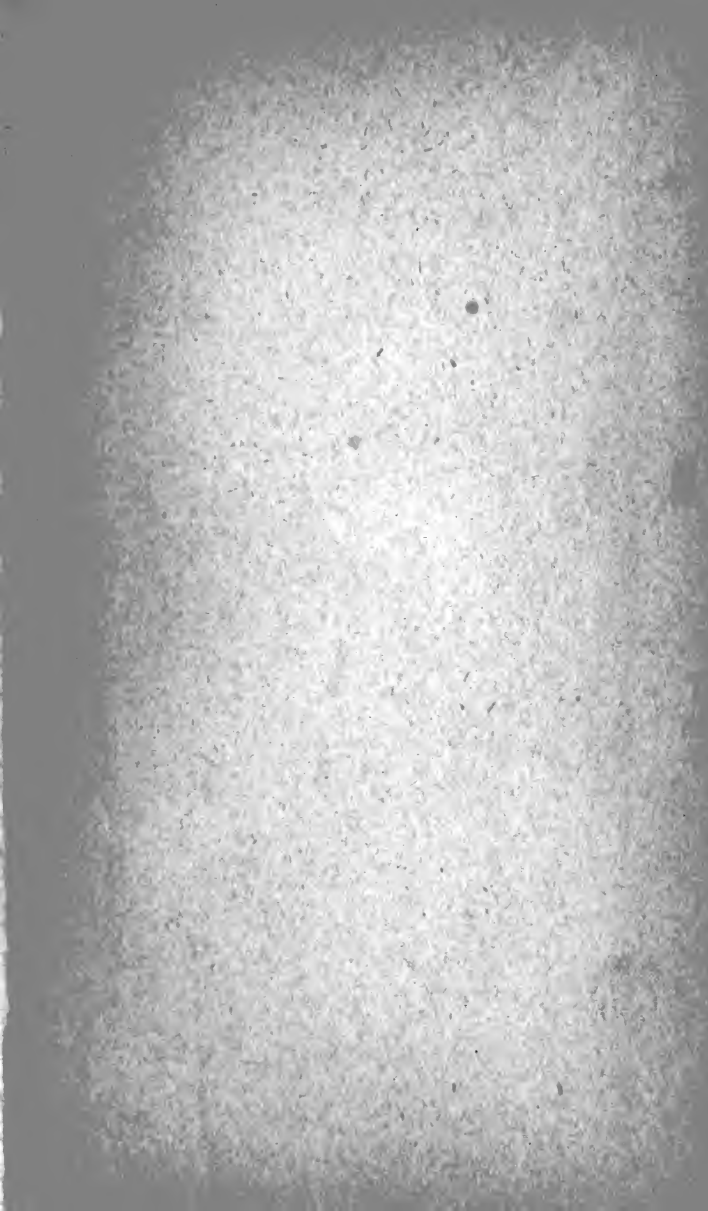
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